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India

THE FIRST FIFTY YEARS
edited by HIRANMAY KARLEKAR



INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS



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Independent India

The First Fifty Years

Edited by

Hiranmay Karlekar



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Acknowledgements

As we charted our plans for the celebrations of the fiftieth Anniversary of Independence, we felt that the story of this period in its multi-faceted dimensions required to be told and treasured 'for a life beyond life'. This story represents both the spirit of the many men and women of vision and purpose who laid the foundations of our nation's endeavours as also the hopes and aspirations of the millions, whose day-to-day lives are critically affected by the depth and commitment of these efforts. The Council regards this compendium of learned essays on India's Polity, Economy, Society and Culture as a soul-searching analysis of the last fifty years and a record for future reference as we walk into the new millennium.

To undertake this rather daunting task a Special Committee was formed under the Chairmanship of the Council's vastly experienced and erudite Vice President, Shri H.Y. Sharada Prasad which included eminent intellectuals like Dr Kapila Vatsyayan, Dr Raja Ramanna, Shri Muchkund Dubey, Professor A.M. Khusro, Shri Dileep Padgaonkar, Shri Raghav Menon, Shri J.C. Kapoor, Shri Tejeshwar Singh and Shri Hiranmay Karlekar.

I express my gratitude to the Committee members for their guidance and suggestions in planning the publication of this commemorative volume. Our heartfelt thanks also to Shri Hiranmay Karlekar who edited all the articles and gave this commemorative volume its final shape.

I recall with thanks the contribution of Smt Meera Shankar, my predecessor, for initiating and launching the project. I am also grateful to my colleagues at the ICCR, especially Shri Ashok Tomar, Deputy Director General, who took the entire administrative burden of seeing the publication through. I am thankful to my other colleagues Dr Kheya Bhattacharya, formerly Senior Programme Director and Shri Vinod Kumar, Programme Officer, for their ready assistance.

The Council is grateful to the distinguished scholars who have contributed to this publication.

Though ICCR has been publishing books in the past, thanks to the ready co-operation of Shri Manzar Khan, Managing Director and Shri Alok Roy Choudhury, Director, Educational Division of Oxford University Press, we believe we have as our co-publisher, not only one of the most professional publishing houses in India, but an organization which will be far more effective in bringing this book to thousands of readers in India and abroad through their efficient commercial outlets. We would like to remember

Shri K.N. Pandita for his editorial assistance, and the editorial staff of Oxford University Press for providing their invaluable professional expertise in publishing this commemorative volume.

HIMACHAL SOM
Director General
Indian Council for Cultural Relations

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KRISHAN KANT

Introduction

August 15, 1947 is a major date in history. It was on that day that the world's second largest nation awoke to life and freedom, as Jawaharlal Nehru declared in his celebrated 'Tryst with Destiny' speech. The event had significance for the rest of the world as well, for it symbolized the end of the Age of Empires, the dark era during which the nations of Europe had enslaved and economically drained peoples in various parts of the globe. The British empire was the largest of these European ventures. India was considered the Jewel in the Crown. India's independence set in motion the process of decolonization the world over. One by one, all the colonized peoples of Africa and Asia threw off the alien yoke, some after long battles and much blood-letting. India itself was fortunate to have a leader in Mahatma Gandhi who taught us how to wage a non-violent war. However, even our freedom was not without bloodshed. We had to pay a terrible price for our liberty in the form of the vivisection of our land. Partition involved the displacement of millions from their original homes and the death of countless numbers.

Free India took Partition in its stride. The great inflow of humanity from across the borders was absorbed and rehabilitated. The country embarked upon the grand task of nation-building. Even before the advent of Mahatma Gandhi on the political scene, the leaders of the freedom movement such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Gopal Krishna Gokhale had proclaimed representative government and democracy to be the national objective. The first job that Independent India accomplished was the drawing up of a constitution which ensured a government of the people, by the people, for the people. At one stroke all adults were enfranchised irrespective of gender, caste, religion, economic status or educational background. Over the last fifty years India has built up vibrant democratic institutions not only at the national and state levels but at the village level as well. Through its federal features the Indian Constitution embodies the spirit of the Indian civilization which visualizes the one in the many and the many in the one. India has always been a land of many religions, many ethnic strains and many languages. Acceptance of diversity or tolerance with us is more than what is usually connoted by the concept of secularism. Mahatma Gandhi expressed the idea in the following words: 'There is in Hinduism room enough for Jesus, as there is for Mohammed, Zoroaster and Moses.' In the Indian concept unity represents truth, which is many faceted. This makes India 'a diversity

in unity' Vivekanand put this succinctly when he said that we not only 'tolerate' but 'accept' other faiths. The national poet Subrahmanya Bharati, in his famous poem, sang that Mother India spoke in eighteen languages. It is the very essence of our culture and an inseparable part of our outlook. During the last fifty years we have resolved many seemingly intractable problems through accommodation, conciliation and give-and-take. It is not as if we have solved all our problems. Many old economic disparities and social disabilities persist. As complacency is shaken off, new expectations arise, particularly with the rapid growth of the media and modes of communication. Sometimes agitators are encouraged by outside elements. But it is an undeniable fact that our economic growth has been too slow. We must candidly admit that our progress is far short of what we should have or could have achieved in fifty years. While our agricultural production has more than doubled and our industrial output has made spectacular progress in terms of volume and technological sophistication — as for example in nuclear energy, satellite technology, electronics and machine-building — the average annual growth rate over the last five decades has been only of the order of 4.4 per cent and widespread poverty still persists. Fortunately we are not wedded to any rigid economic ideology. The genius of democracy is peaceful change. We have effected course correction from time to time whenever we found that our policies were not yielding the expected results. In the last decade many regulations that had been put in place to build the public sector have been dismantled and the economy has been progressively liberalized. The experience of some neighbouring countries shows that the market is not the magic answer to all problems. We have judiciously to combine liberalization with positive state policies in the field of primary education, health services and mother-and-child care.

One of the main reasons for the persistence of poverty in India is the phenomenal increase in population. At the time of Independence our population was 350 million. In half a century it has grown to about 940 million. While this is primarily a consequence of the control and elimination of several kinds of epidemics, owing to which infant mortality has declined and the life-span has lengthened, it is also an indication that our programmes of literacy and women's education have badly lagged behind. There are areas within the country, such as Kerala (population 32 million), where the literacy levels of both men and women are as high as in most advanced countries and the rate of growth of population as low. This is proof that social benefits do not necessarily depend upon very high levels of income. It also means that if only we can mobilize the popular will in the rest of the country the same way, we can achieve the same results as Kerala has achieved.

Whatever our economic shortcomings during the last fifty years, fortunately, the story is different in the cultural field. One could say without fear of contradiction that it has been one of the most exciting periods in the arts in India's long history. Our literatures, our music, our dances, our drama,

our films, our paintings and sculpture have witnessed an outburst of creativity. There is considerable experimentation with the new under the impact of artistic globalization, at the same time there is an earnest exploration of the classical, the traditional and the sturdy local forms. In no country are folk art varieties so vibrant as in India today. At the same time our classical musicians and our new authors are also attracting world-wide attention and acclaim. Freedom has indeed led to a great cultural efflorescence.

This volume is an earnest attempt on the part of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations to give a connected account of the change that has occurred in the life of India in its first fifty years as a free nation. Eminent contributors have written with insight and candour on their fields of specialization, pointing out both the achievements and the distance still to be covered. I trust it will give readers in other countries an idea of our endeavours and of the climate of open and honest debate that prevails in India.



KRISHAN KANT
Vice President of India
President, Indian Council for Cultural Relations

1947: The Route Through History

Purely in terms of time, fifty years is an insignificant span in the life of a country whose civilization covers five millennia. The importance of a chronological period, however, depends not on its length but on its uniqueness, achievements and role in catalyzing future developments. Ashoka, the great Mauryan emperor, ruled for forty years. Yet his reign remains one of the most remarkable periods in Indian history. Haunted by remorse over the slaughter and destruction caused by his victorious campaign in Kalinga in 260 BC, he embraced Buddhism and made strenuous efforts to propagate it. His reign witnessed the holding of the Third Buddhist Council in Pataliputra in 250 BC which set in motion the forces which later split the Buddhists into the orthodox *Hinayana* or Little Vehicle school and the more liberal and inclusive *Mahayana* or the Great Vehicle school. The Council also decided to send missionaries all over the subcontinent and make Buddhism an actively proselytizing religion.¹ Thanks to this and the strenuous support of Ashoka, Buddhism spread to Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Tibet. The Mauryas, who ruled over the Himalayan foothills, had close relations with Nepal and one of Ashoka's daughters is supposed to have married a nobleman from the mountains of that country.² The king of Sri Lanka, Tissa, appears to have modelled himself after the Mauryan emperor.³ Relations between India and Sri Lanka were close and friendly. There were frequent exchanges of gifts and envoys. Ashoka sent his own son, Mahinda, as a Buddhist missionary to Sri Lanka.

During Ashoka's reign, the Mauryan empire united the whole of the subcontinent. He was, besides, in contact with Greek monarchs like Antiochus II Theos of Syria, Ptolemy III Philadelphus of Egypt, Antigonas Gonatas of Macedon, Magas of Cyrene and Alexander of Epirus. The reigns of the first three Mauryas — Bindusara, Chandragupta and Ashoka — covered ninety years but have left a lasting mark on Indian history. As Romila Thapar points out, the significance of this period lay 'not merely in the conquests of the rulers but the fact that they were able to weld the largely diverse elements of the subcontinent into an empire, and they gave expression to an imperial vision which was to dominate succeeding centuries of Indian political life'.⁴

Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar ruled for about fifty years. Since for the first five years the real ruler was Bairam Khan, the regent, it was a period of forty-five years from 1560 to 1605 which bore the imprimatur of Akbar's own genius. During this period, his empire directly covered more than half

of the subcontinent and was the dominant force over the whole of it. Its fame spread far and wide. More importantly, the process of Hindu-Muslim rapprochement, which had proceeded only fitfully till then, became a matter of state policy. Makhani Lal Roy Choudhury, one of India's foremost scholars of Akbar's reign, points out that the Mughal emperor 'had from the beginning a high respect for Hindus'.⁵ The fact that he was born in the house of a Hindu nobleman who had given shelter to his fleeing father Humayun had made a deep impression on him, as had the invaluable service rendered to him by Behari Mal in the initial period of his reign when he had to tread a perilous course between Bairam Khan and Maham Anaga. Personal inclination was reinforced by reasons of state. He recognized that Hindu help was essential to the running of the administration. Nearly fifty per cent of his army was manned by Hindus and 'the revenue department was practically a monopoly of the Hindus'.⁶ Hindu princesses in the harem were allowed to follow their own socio-religious customs. He abolished the pilgrim tax at Mathura, a city holy to Hindus, and the poll-tax of *jizya* which Hindus had to pay until then. After dealing a severe blow to Rajput power by capturing Chitore and Ranthambhor in 1568-9, which left only Maharana Pratap Singh of Mewar resisting valiantly, he won important Rajput princes over by appointing them as military commanders and governors and conferring on them other high offices and positions of trust and power. They enjoyed autonomy within their states and the same privileges as Muslim noblemen of equal status. One of his most trusted generals and a member of his inner council was Maharaja Man Singh of Jaipur. The trusted head of his revenue administration was Raja Todar Mal.

Akbar's attitude towards Hindus bred intense resentment among the orthodox Islamic clergy and other fanatical elements. They organized a revolt with a half brother of his, Mirza Muhammad Hakim in Kabul, as the figurehead. Akbar crushed the rebellion in 1581 and, in the following year, proclaimed the creed of Din-I-Ilahi. It was not, as Roy Choudhury points out, a new religion; 'it was a sufi order with its own formula in which all the principles enunciated are to be found in the Quran and the practices in the contemporary sufi order.'⁷ Nor did Akbar have any pretension of being the prophet of a new religion. He used to say, 'Why should I claim to guide men before I myself am guided?'⁸ Din-I-Ilahi was a result of the assimilative, Sufi character of Akbar's spirituality, his tolerance and innate liberalism. In many ways, he was like his great predecessor, Ashoka. Like the latter, he issued 'a general order to state officials to look after the spiritual development of all his subjects'.⁹ Like the Mauryan emperor, he 'had not ceased to be a king because he had become a religious devotee'.¹⁰ Like Ashoka, again, he made a clear distinction between his personal religious belief and his duty as an emperor not to be biased in favour of or against any religion.¹¹ Like Ashoka, he succeeded in welding the diverse elements of the subcontinent into a single empire. He made Hindus partners in a

great imperial venture and his alliance with the Rajput princes was a crucial part of this wider strategy.

Reigns like Ashoka's and Akbar's stand out because they are rare in history. The same applies to the rule of Pericles in Athens which lasted thirty years or so till 430 B.C. It was characterized by a burst of creativity in the arts, letters and philosophy which has left a lasting mark on human civilization. Xerxes, the Persian emperor, had captured Athens; the temples on the Acropolis had been destroyed by fire. Pericles built the Parthenon and the other temples whose ruins now provide mute testimony to the grand vision that encompassed their construction as well as the genius of Pheidias, the sculptor, who was appointed by the state to carve out breathtaking statues of gods and goddesses. By the time the Periclean era ended, Athens was the most beautiful city of the Hellenic world.

It was also intellectually the most febrile. Herodotus, perhaps the earliest writer of history, was originally from Halicarnassus in Asia Minor. He, however, lived in Athens, was patronized by the Athenian State and wrote an account of the Persian wars from the Athenian perspective. Aeschylus inaugurated the Greek tragedy. Other playwrights of the period whose works continue to be admired and staged were Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes. One of the greatest philosophers of ancient Greece, Socrates, grew up to be a young man when Pericles ruled; Plato, also from Athens, belongs to a later period.

The Periclean period saw the Athenian democracy, different from all other democracies in the large proportion of freemen it had to slaves (2:1), its irrepressible vitality and the remarkable freedom of speech it permitted, reach its apogee. It was also a period when Greek settlers spread far and wide, from Euxine to the hills of South Italy.

The French Revolution and the Napoleonic era together lasted roughly four years less than Periclean Athens — twenty-six years, from 1789 to 1815 — but released forces which drastically altered the future course of European history.¹² The French Revolution destroyed the *ancien regime*, ended feudalism within France, founded new institutions based on the sovereignty of the people and personal liberty and equality. The Reign of Terror, the rule of the Directory and Napoleon's empire undid a lot of all this even before the Vienna Settlement (1815) and the restoration of the Bourbons. Yet the memory of the revolution and the ideals inspiring it, its slogan of liberty, equality and fraternity, its Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, haunted Europe throughout the nineteenth century, turning the latter almost into a century of revolutions.

Napoleonic occupation ended feudalism, in both its legal and economic aspects, in the Low Countries, much of Germany and Italy. The nobles, the middle classes and the peasants were now subjects of the state, liable to pay taxes; the latter's levying and collection were made more efficient and equitable. Old guilds and town oligarchies as well as tariff barriers were

abolished. Greater equality prevailed everywhere; careers were now more open to talent. Napoleon's effort to beat the whole of western Europe into a single block of annexed or subjugated countries destroyed the accumulated relics of petty feudal power, antiquated jurisdictions, privilege and outworn territorial jurisdictions. Most of these could not be restored. All this ensured that the results of the churning caused by the French Revolution would not be wiped out, and unleashed forces of modernization which could not be rolled back. Despite Metternich, Europe was never the same again.

THE BRITISH BEQUEST

British rule contributed to the modernization of India far more fundamentally than the French Revolution and Napoleon did to that of Europe. It also unified the country on a more durable basis than ever before. And it did all this in the 190 years between the Battle of Plassey in 1757, which gave British power its first foothold in India, and Indian Independence in 1947. The first fifty years of Indian Independence, the various aspects, challenges and achievements which this volume seeks to focus on, would have been very different but for the profound changes brought about by the British.

As seen earlier, India had been united during the imperial reigns of Ashoka and Akbar; geographically, the rule of some rulers of the Gupta dynasty — particularly those of Samudra Gupta and Chandra Gupta II — which stretched from the fourth to the sixth century AD, can be called imperial. As Romila Thapar, however, points out, 'Centralized control, an essential of an imperial structure, was not as fully realized in the Gupta Government or in its successors as it had been under the Mauryas'.¹³ Such a structure was again established under Akbar and continued under his successors Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb whose reigns spanned the seventeenth century. After Aurangzeb's death in 1707 and that of his competent successor, Bahadur Shah, five years later, the empire of the Great Mughals began to crumble. The devastating raid by Nadir Shah in 1739 was a severe blow; another was delivered by Ahmad Shah Abdali's invasion in 1761. In the 1740s the Subadars of Bengal, Awadh, Hyderabad and Carnatic had become to all intents and purposes, independent rulers.¹⁴ Besides, the Jats and Sikhs had also set up their own states, as had Rohillas, Afghan horsemen, and the Rajputs in the north and Telugu-speaking warrior clans in the south.

The most important power to rise on the debris of the Mughal empire was that of the Marathas who occupied huge tracts of Mughal territory by 1730, besides holding large areas in central India and the Deccan and forcibly collecting taxes from as far as Orissa. When Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India, it was the Marathas and not the forces of the Mughal emperor who opposed him in the third battle of Panipat in 1761. Their defeat dealt a severe blow to their power around the time when victory over Nawab Sirajadaulla of Bengal in the Battle of Plassey in 1757, had given the British

their first foothold on power in India. Mahadaji Scindia, an outstanding ruler, briefly revived Maratha power in the 1770s and 1780s and was even acknowledged as the protector of the Mughal emperor. That, however, was the last flicker.

The British had to defeat, in a series of difficult campaigns during which they also suffered serious reverses, not only the Marathas but also the rulers of Carnatic, Haidar Ali and his son Tipu Sultan, before they could establish their power on a secure basis. The process of expansion, however, continued till the 1850s when, among other kingdoms, Awadh was annexed by Lord Dalhousie. As British power spread, its exploitative nature, the unfair trading practices of the East India Company and, to a lesser extent, other Europeans, increasingly led to resistance particularly by peasants. Discontent was also growing among the Indian Sepoys of the British Army over overseas service, pay and other issues. What proved to be the last straw was the introduction of new Enfield rifles, the cartridges of which had to be bitten off before loading. The word spread that its grease was made of the fat of cows and pigs the consumption of which were forbidden to Hindus and Muslims respectively by their religions. The result was the great uprising of the Sepoys in 1857, which also had considerable popular support, and which has been described as 'the most dramatic instance of traditional India's struggle against foreign rule'.¹⁵

It was the crushing of the revolt, which shook British power to its foundations, that led to the final consolidation of British rule all over India. It also saw the latter come under the direct rule of the British Crown, then worn by Queen Victoria, in 1858. The new dispensation produced far-reaching consequences. The political unity achieved by the British created one of the prerequisites — a Territorial cradle — for the emergence of India as a nation and the awakening of its nationalist sentiments. The concepts of the nation and the state have been closely associated. According to Max Weber, the community of sentiments which a nation represents, 'would adequately manifest itself in a state of its own: hence, a nation is a community which normally tends to produce a state of its own.'¹⁶ E.J. Hobsbawm, on the other hand, states that nations are more often the consequence of setting up of a state than they are its foundations.¹⁷

Nation-states with well-defined — though sometimes disputed — boundaries have a continuous history in Europe since the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries when they emerged. India, as has been seen, had been united under the Mauryas and the Great Mughals but had been divided into various independent kingdoms under the lesser Mughals as the seventeenth century progressed. The unity established by the British was, however, qualitatively different. This was not because of the highly efficient and centralized administration they set up — the other two empires had also done so — but because of their establishment of the administrative and infrastructural basis of a modern state and the commercial and industrial groundwork of colonial/capitalist development.

The magnitude of the differences can be easily perceived. Different parts of the Maurya and Mughal empires were connected by waterways and highways. The British established a countrywide network of railways which provided for unprecedentedly rapid communication, and the telegraph, enabling almost instantaneous transmission of messages. Meant to facilitate the movement of troops and commerce, both also helped education and ideas to travel to the intellectually stagnant hinterland areas. The process assumed a special significance because of the system of education the British established during the governor-generalship of Lord William Bentinck (1828–35) and the far-reaching consequences of the impact it had on Indian society. The purpose of the system, in the words of Thomas Babington Macaulay, Law member in Bentinck's Council, was 'to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern; a class of persons Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect'.¹⁸

Somewhat unintended results followed. Exposure to the critical methods, rationalism and the republican and liberal ideas of the West triggered an intellectual turmoil in the minds of the young, educated Bengalis. Simultaneously, the rediscovery of India's glorious ancient history and rich civilizational legacy by European orientalist like James Princep, William Jones, Monier Williams, Max Müller and others, greatly boosted their self-esteem and confidence in their ability. Two important results followed from this. The first was the emergence of one of the main prerequisites of nationalist sentiments. Ernest Renan identified it when he said, 'A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Only two things, actually, constitute this soul, this spiritual principle. One is in the past, the other is in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich legacy of remembrances, the other is the actual consent, the drive to live together, the will to continue to value the heritage which all hold in common. . . . To have common glories in the past, a common will in the present; to have accomplished great things together, to wish to do so again, that is the essential condition of being a nation.'¹⁹ Max Weber also underlined the importance of a feeling of pride when he said that the nation 'is based upon sentiments of prestige, which often extend deep down to the petty bourgeois masses of political structures rich in the historical attainments of power positions'.²⁰ Also associated with the concept is the idea of a providential and specific cultural mission. 'The significance of the "nation" is usually anchored in the superiority, or at least the irreplaceability, of the cultural values that are to be preserved and developed only through the cultivation of the peculiarity of the group.'²¹

RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION

The second outcome of the intellectual ferment created by the introduction of Western education was the Bengal Renaissance of the nineteenth century characterized by a brilliant burst of creativity in literature, historical studies,

scientific investigation, social criticism and journalism, and a yearning for intellectual life in some other parts of India. The methods of the scholars, however, further enhanced the confidence of the Indians and encouraged them to examine the causes of the country's decline into colonial servitude as well as of the stagnation, degradation and intellectual barrenness of their ritual and superstition-plagued life.

Their religion, ancient scriptural and logical texts, epics, mythologies, customs, rituals and practices came under relentless scrutiny. Divergent interpretations and evaluations led to bitter debate between conservative upholders of the *status quo* and radical advocates of reform which in turn led to the birth of reformist movements like the Brahmo Samaj in Bengal and Arya Samaj in North India. Though there was no major schism like the Reformation in Europe in the Hindu society, the reformist movements catalyzed far-reaching changes in the latter.

Established by Raja Rammohun Roy, who is often referred to as the founder of modern India, the Brahmo Samaj, which based its creed on the universalist, monist, theist humanism of the *Upanishads*, was assimilative and inclusive. Somewhat kindred in spirit to the Unitarians, it drew liberally upon the Quran as well as the teachings of Guru Nanak and sought to synthesize the new learning from the West arriving through English education, with India's ancient philosophy and wisdom. Socially progressive, it played a major role in the emancipation of women. Most of the outstanding personalities of the nineteenth-century Bengal Renaissance, including Rabindranath Tagore, came from its fold.

Unlike the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya Samaj totally rejected the West. Essentially a revivalist movement founded by Swami Dayananda, who was born as Mula Shankar, it believed in the infallibility of the Vedas and was bitterly critical of Islam. It was, however, socially reformist like the Brahmo Samaj and opposed the caste system and stood for the emancipation of women.

There were a number of other reformist movements including the Prarthana Samaj (a kindred body to the Brahmo Samaj) and the Satya Sodhak Samaj, established by Jyotirao Phule in Maharashtra, and the Singh Sabha among the Sikhs, the Aligarh movement among Muslims and the Rehnumai Mazdayasan Sabha among the Parsis. A wide range of issues from the merits of the caste system to the respective roles of reason and faith in life and the grounds justifying social reform were passionately discussed. The special importance of the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj, however, lies in the fact that they represented the two broad lines of nineteenth century India's response to the West. Both responses — synthesization and rejection — influenced the evolution of India's nationalism which grew under the stimulus of British rule.

The idea that India or *Bharatvarsha* is one country goes back to the early days of its history. It fuelled the imperial ambitions of the Mauryas,

Europe, the Muslims and others including the Marathas, and in some not strengthened by the withdrawal of the Maratha and Mughal empires. Yet, the patterns of rising proto-nationalist sentiment and mobilisation there put in perspective the rise of a strong and the coming of the Nation. This is best by comparing India's sense of 'nationalism' with Western concepts. At the dawn of the nineteenth century, the sense of nationalism of the modern nation, and especially commercial and proto-industrial,

He had said earlier that the civilisation in its modern sense was no older than the eighteenth century, and it was the 'old programme'. The first wave of nationalism came as well it came in clear appreciation of Europe as the modern civilisation, which had the superior, the 'great nations' — Germany and Italy — through a process of assimilation. It also saw the

splitting up of Austria-Hungary into two distinct groups, one authoritarian in internal matters, and the other more democratic on the basis of national principles following the Congress of 1867. Besides, the century witnessed the emergence of several nationality-based states — Greece, Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria — out of the territories of the Ottoman empire, and at least two nationalist revolts of the Poles. It was not for nothing that Walter Baedeker felt that 'nation-making was the essential content of nineteenth century evolution'.

NATION AND NATIONALISM

Western education through the English language introduced Indians to the concepts of nation and nationalism, news of the struggles of Garibaldi and Mazzini in reuniting Italy inspired Indian intellectuals. British rule also created a modern, educated middle class capable of comprehending and developing the two concepts. No doubt India had since early in its history, mercantile and banking communities, professional administrators, artisans and persons engaged in callings like teaching, medicine and law. Their counterparts in Europe played a major role in shaping the continent's history by resisting exactions by feudal lords and monarchs and gradually challenging royal power itself. The emerging bourgeoisie and landed squires fought British monarchs throughout the eighteenth century and finally spearheaded the 'glorious revolution' of 1688 which replaced James II by William of Orange as the King of England and put the stamp of finality on the limited and constitutional nature of British monarchy. A century and a year later, the bourgeoisie and *canaille* of Paris inaugurated the French Revolution whose epochal contributions have been mentioned above.

In India, however, the trading and mercantile classes have been from the beginning inhibited from aspiring for political power or playing a martial role. Both were the business of the Kshatriyas who occupied the second rung below the Brahmins in the caste hierarchy. Merchants and bankers were Vaishyas who occupied the third rung above the Shudras or cultivators. Their

position continued to be the same under Mughal rule. In the eyes of the Great Mughal, Aurangzeb, as Western commentators in the Indian trading community acted in subservience to the princely order, not in opposition to it, under the effective rule of Mughals.²⁵ Despite their immense wealth, their social status was much inferior, compared to that of their European counterparts. There was a hint of a change during the eighteenth century when the Mughal empire was disintegrating under the lesser Mughals. The regional kingdoms which achieved de facto independence in the 1740s under Nawab Alivardi Khan of Bengal, Nawab Sadat Khan of Awadh, Nizam Asaf Ali of Hyderabad and the Nawab of Carnatic Arcot were dependent on merchant-bankers like Jagat Seth of Bengal. These merchant bankers, however, could never emerge as architects of social and political upheavals. They could at best participate in conspiracies as Jagat Seth did with Robert Clive, Mir Jafar, Omri Chand and others on the eve of the Battle of Plassey.

The artisans presented a much more pathetic picture. Despite their skill, they lived in miserable conditions and lacked education 'to support their skill or sustain the quality of their workmanship'.²⁶ The domestic scale of production, the practice of selling directly to middlemen and the state's monopoly of production, prevented them from emerging as a component of a vibrant, assertive and powerful middle class. As for the landed aristocracy, its members were rent receivers rather than the agrarian entrepreneurs of Europe, to say nothing of the British sheep farmers who enclosed land and derived surpluses from the wool trade. Sunk in lethargy and vice, they could hardly be expected to be authors of revolutionary social and political change.

A new commercial class rose, especially in Bengal, in the second half of the eighteenth century from the ranks of people engaged as agents of British mercantile and banking houses. Variouslly called *Dabbhas* (interpreters), *Banyans* (brokers), *Shroffs* (cashiers — known for their specialized knowledge of currency) and *Parkars* (people who went around on foot — *Pa* — to order and collect goods), their power, influence and wealth grew with the waxing of British power and trade after the battle of Plassey. Starting as *Banyans* of European firms, they quickly learnt the ropes and established firms of their own. According to the *Bengal Directory* of 1835, Dwarkanath Tagore was the only Indian member of the Committee of Management of the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce that year; Rustamjee Cowasjee was one of the eight members of the Committee of Correspondence.²⁶ Again, of the 103 members of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce in 1858, five — including four Bengalis — were Indians.²⁷

The new commercial class took the lead in going in for English education, 'especially in Bengal where the superior caste of Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas were the first to take to the new trades arising from the increasing import of foreign manufactures'.²⁸ The traditional gulf between learning and trade had started to get narrowed. Besides, the spread of Western education, the expansion of administration to keep pace with the requirements of the

expanding British empire and the professionalisation of professions as the law, medicine and engineering in the British colonial state were important in promoting the development of a bourgeoisie and professional middle class. In many parts, and particularly Bengal where the Portuguese had been at work for much, and a most lucrative investment of money, there was a good or expected large landed interest. It was, however, by no means a totally homogeneous category. There were marked differences in income and status. Certainly the privileged elements generally controlled the large landed estates of agribusiness and the professions had much in common with bourgeoisie-like elements employed as clerks and school teachers, and who often mutually resented the former.

It was at this time a century or very less, section of which, however, had a common identity as *bhadralok* translated literally as 'well-folk' where British had defined it as 'a socially married and conservatively superior group, economically dependent on landed rents and professional and clerical employment'. British had considered it to be particularly important to distinguish between the *bhadralok* and the middle class. If by 'class' a static group is meant (in the manner of Talcott Parsons), then the *bhadralok* were 'upper' and not 'middle' class. If 'class' is used in the Marxian sense of an economic group, then the *bhadralok* will be seen to have excluded many middle class men, for example, merchants and prosperous peasants, and to have included some persons from classes both higher and lower.¹

The *bhadralok* as well as their counterparts outside Bengal who emerged as the middle classes grew in other parts of India with the expansion of British power, became the standard bearers of Indian nationalism. The spread of national sentiments was in turn facilitated by the growing role of English as the link language among the various Indian elites which spoke regional languages. Besides introducing them to the concepts of nations and nationalism which we have already noted, it reinforced their mutual complementarity in terms of Indian culture with that in terms of their familiarity with western culture. It also reinforced their inherited common cultural identity as Indians with the new one of being English-educated — which distinguished them from the bulk of their countrymen who only spoke Indian languages and gave them a feeling of being superior to them. The latter in turn inclined them to view themselves as natural leaders of their less fortunate countrymen.

Meanwhile, the various Indian languages were becoming more versatile, better structured grammatically and richer. This first happened with Bengali. As Professor Amales Tripathy points out in his outstanding Bengali work *Italir Renaissance: Bangalir Sanskriti* (Italy's Renaissance and the Culture of Bengalis), without the support of the Bengali and Hindusthani departments of Fort William College in Calcutta, where every young Englishman joining the service of the East India Company had to learn oriental languages, and the efforts of Christian missionaries like N. Halhed and William Carey,

Bengali prose would not have developed as rapidly as it did. While Hare was a Bengali grammarian, it is well known that a century later, Bengali, at a time when most like Russian, Hindi and Urdu were still written in script, had already surpassed them. The Bengali language was further developed by the school of education and social reformer, Jibanananda Mukherjee, writers like Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Haraprasad Shastri, Pankaj and Mitra and later, Rabindranath Tagore.

Though the process started in Bengal, regional languages began evolving towards greater maturity in different parts of India as well. The significance of this can be understood by recalling the important role Benedict Anderson ascribes to the vernacular languages in the emergence of nationalism in Europe. According to him, the emergence of imagined communities of nations became possible in Europe because of the decline of the imagined community of Christendom. The latter in turn followed the dethronement of Latin as the sole means of accessing Christianity's message, of the belief that society was naturally organised under monarchs who ruled by virtue of some cosmological dispensation and a conception of temporality in which cosmology and history were indispensable. A most critical role was played in this by print capitalism — one of the earliest capitalist enterprises. Having saturated the bilingual Latin market it began targeting the huge market constituted by the monoglot masses, particularly since a Europe-wide shortage of money made printers think more and more of selling cheap editions in the vernaculars. Three other factors reinforced the vernacularizing thrust of capitalism. The first was the esotericization of Latin, and its distancing from ecclesiastical and quotidian life under the stylistic impact of the sophisticated classical writing revived by the humanist scholars of the Renaissance. Secondly, the increased use of vernacular languages during the Reformation quickly created a new reading public, facilitated their socio-political mobilization, and widened vernacular publishing markets. Thirdly, the slow, geographically uneven spread of particular vernaculars as instruments of linguistic centralization, elevated them to the status of languages of power. Their emergence as the rivals of Latin also contributed to the decline of the imagined community of Christendom.

Since the numerous spoken languages in pre-print Europe provided very small markets, print capitalism assembled those which were amenable to the process into larger print languages. The latter laid the basis of national consciousness in three ways. First, they created unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars. Large numbers of people speaking different varieties of French, English or Spanish who found it difficult — or were unable — to converse with one another in their respective spoken languages, could easily do that in the print language. Each group of people, thus connected through print, formed an embryo of a nationally imagined community. Secondly, print capitalism gave a fixity and permanence to language which in the long run created an impression of

literature, access to the literature system of the region. Finally, some countries played the role of purveyors of print, supplying others with books and stationery. India included administrative institutions. The printing press with capitalised ownership and profit language, became the means of spread for vernacular languages by the late twentieth century, largely because most of their subscribers were the printing and press and books.

In India, vernaculars defined such a territory that with an increasing impetus from the west and east, influences came of the British. The latter, while trying to create homogeneous nations, came of an ethnic policy, which turned led to the gradual decline in place what the Hindu Kingdoms had in the period of Europe and Christianity. The other major difference with Europe was that print capitalism was not the major force behind the evolution of the vernacular languages. British rule hindered rather than encouraged the growth of Indian languages. Indian vernaculars needed their development to have a more direct relation, one of them being education in the use of Sanskrit and Pali in my official educational and social spheres, followed by the use of English as the language of administration and higher education. This like the continuation of Latin which Anderson mentions, paved the way for the development of the regional languages. As soon as the advent of English, helped rather than hindered the use of the regional languages. Like Reformation in Europe, the various reform movements in India contributed both to the development of the vernacular languages and their readership. So did the debates between people like Raja Rammohan Roy and the Christian missionaries, the proselytizing efforts of the missionaries and, of course, the great chaining of the movement for Independence. These — and not the emergence of print capitalism — led to the publication of an increasingly large number of books, journals and daily newspapers. In turn, these languages not only helped the refinement of ideas and concepts as they became the media of sophisticated discourse, but also spread the nationalist message to the overwhelming majority of the masses **unacquainted with English.**

The important role the development of languages played also becomes clear on considering Karl Deutsch's¹ view that there is in a nation a social, economic and political alignment of individuals from different social classes. It is primarily based on the complementarity of communication habits. Its secondary basis is the complementarity of acquired social and economic preferences which involve the mobility of goods or persons. The strength of the pulls of these complementarities depends on a nation's communicative efficiency which in turn depends on its communicative facilities which include language, alphabet, systems of writing, painting, calculating and so on. It includes information lying in memories, associations, habits and preferences, material facilities like libraries, statues, signposts and the like, as well as facilities for retrieving information from storage or memory, its transmission and recombination. In his emphasis on communicative

efficiency Deutsch anticipates the German social philosopher Jürgen Habermas on the efficiency of rational communication as crucial to the formation of public opinion in what he calls the public sphere. Equally, his emphasis on communicative facilities anticipates what Habermas calls the 'lifeworld', a shared world of knowledge and meaning, of definitions and understanding, which makes ordinary symbolic interaction possible, which lends coherence and direction to everyday life and acts as the background to social formation and legitimization of societies.

While literature as well as historical and analytical writing — growing in symbiosis with the regional languages as well as English and drawing upon the shared world of knowledge, meanings definitions and understanding as well as the kind of facilities Deutsch talks about — helped in shaping thoughts, as important a role was played by the journals and newspapers in these languages which began proliferating in the nineteenth century. In fact, they perhaps played a more effective role than books in the controversies over social reform as well as in defining, rousing and conveying nationalist thoughts. According to Mohit Matra, there were 16 language newspapers and periodicals in Bengal in 1830.³⁴ Earlier the first Gujarati weekly, *Mumbaina Samachar*,³⁵ which still exist today as a daily under the name of *Mumbai Samachar* had been started in 1826 the same year in which the first Hindi paper *Oodant Martand* was launched.³⁶

The first newspaper which however provided systematic and fearless criticism of British rule in India was the *Hindoo Patriot*. While not demanding independence for India, it was fiercely critical of British oppression and exploitation — whether it was the taking over of Indian kingdoms like that of Awadh by the Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, through the application of the Doctrine of Lapse;³⁷ or the savage slaughter, after the suppression of the great uprising of 1857, of hundreds suspected to have participated in it; or the brutal oppression of the peasants and villagers of Bengal by the indigo planters. Its editor, Hurish Chander Mukherjee, wrote in a language which is strikingly modern and marshalled facts and arguments with a cogency which should be the envy of some of the best leader writers in English of our time.

The anger Mukherjee's campaigns ignited certainly went against the British and, along with the resentment brewing over a number of other issues, contributed to the rise of national sentiments. Other newspapers and publications which began appearing gradually played an important role not only in this process but also in carrying the message of nationalism and the freedom struggle as the latter gained in momentum. Special mention has to be made of English publications like *The Indian Mirror*, *Bengalee*, *The Hindu*, *The Tribune*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (which changed overnight from Bengali to English to escape the draconian provisions of the Vernacular Press Act of 1878), *Bande Mataram* and *The Mahratta*. The Indian language publications which stand out include the *Kesari*, *Swadesamitran*, *Jugantar*, *Akhbar-i-am*,

Sambad, *Amrita*, and *Asiatic Bazar Patrika*. An early organ of serious nationalist discourse was the *Bangadar* run edited by Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay. The best known among the later ones were the *Modern Review* and *Panchajanya*, both edited by Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, and *Indian Review* edited by G.A. Natesan.

ANGER AGAINST THE BRITISH

The influence of these newspapers and journals extended far beyond metropolitan cities. Many of the schools, colleges and public libraries which sprang up in the districts subscribed to them. Sometimes several persons read the same publication. Some of the vernacular ones were read out for people who could not read. Besides, the views articulated by these came to be repeated in numerous private conversations and discussions and gradually merged into the general stream of public opinion. Nevertheless, until Mahatma Gandhi became active in Indian politics in the second decade of the twentieth century, public opinion was mainly the opinion of the *bhadralok* in Bengal and their counterparts elsewhere in India, whom we shall club together and henceforth call the white-collar upper and middle classes.¹⁸ And their opinion was turning increasingly against the British for a variety of reasons. While the rules framed under the Charter Act of 1833 had declared all public careers open to competition regardless of a person's caste, creed or colour, and a system of competition was introduced in 1853 in recruitment to the East India Company's Covenanted Civil Service, the higher echelons of the bureaucracy remained beyond the reach of Indians. Things did not change even after India came under the direct rule of the British Crown and the Covenanted Civil Service was replaced by the Indian Civil Service (ICS), recruitment to which was also made on the basis of competitive examinations. Indians found it almost impossible to compete since the examinations were held in England and there was an age limit. The demand for the simultaneous holding of these examinations in India and the opening up of the higher bureaucracy to Indians therefore came to be made with increasing force. British refusal to relent led to widespread discontent and a nationwide agitation during 1877-88.

There was also widespread anger over Viceroy Lord Lytton's expensive Afghan wars, the cruel indifference to the severe famines which broke out in 1876-7, his enactment of the Arms Act (1878) which prohibited Indians from carrying arms without license, and attempt to still angry criticism of his policies in the language press by the enactment of the draconian Vernacular Press Act of 1878. Above all, there was the ubiquitous racism of the British which manifested itself daily in slights to which even the highest of Indians were not immune. Its most organized and vocal manifestation, however, came in 1883 in the form of an agitation by the European and Anglo-Indian communities against the Ilbert Bill (1882) which sought to

empower Indian magistrates in the districts to try Europeans. The virulently anti-Indian and starkly racist pronouncements that marked the agitation produced a strong reaction among Indians who mounted a campaign in support of the Bill in the same year and who were incensed when it was withdrawn.

Discontent was also growing over Britain's economic exploitation of India. From the 1850s India had been systematically turned into an exporter of agricultural products like cotton, jute, tea, coffee and oil seeds. From the country's rising export surplus was met a series of what were described as home charges which included the Secretary of State's India's Office in London, wars at home, purchase of military stores, pensions for British civilian and military officers and a guaranteed six per cent annual interest on the railways. 'At the turn of the century visible home charges annually amounted to between seventeen to eighteen million pounds sterling.'³⁹ There were, besides, private remittances by British officers serving in India, transfer of profits by British merchants, and 'invisible' service charges like those for shipping, banking and insurance. The real burden of India's payments to Britain was increased by the decline in the value of the Indian rupee as a result of the growing pressure on it. The silver-based Indian rupee, worth two shillings in 1870, had depreciated against the pound sterling to 1.2 shillings in 1893 when it was shifted to a gold standard.⁴⁰

Britain's bleeding of India has been exhaustively documented and analysed by two early nationalist leaders, Dadabhai Naoroji and Romesh Chander Dutt, the latter's *Economic History of India* in two volumes being regarded as a classic. Not only was no effort spared to extract the last ounce of wealth from India, the latter was also sought to be maintained as a lucrative market for British-manufactured products irrespective of its own condition, to say nothing of fair play. Thus despite the financial crisis created by the Afghan wars of Lord Lytton, pressure from the British textile industry prevented an increase in customs duties in the late 1870s. These duties were abolished in 1882. When economic compulsions led to a reimposition of duties on textile imports in the 1890s, a countervailing excise duty was clamped on Indian textiles. As a result, the infant Indian textile industry in Bombay and Ahmedabad was denied protective tariff and the process of industrialization was stunted in India.⁴¹

India's economic decline adversely affected the white-collar upper and middle classes as it affected the other classes. Meanwhile, opportunities of employment in the bureaucracy had started declining as the latter stopped growing at the earlier pace with the completion of the territorially expansionist phase of the British empire; the professions, particularly that of law, had also become overcrowded. Land had been an important source of income for this class following the Permanent Settlement of 1793 in Bengal which made it a secure and lucrative form of investment. Income from land began to decline thanks to fragmentation in the absence of anything similar to the

law of primogeniture, and sub-infeudation which made holdings increasingly uneconomic. There was a general mood of despair, gloom and bitterness.

The 1870s and 1880s were critical decades. The former saw the emergence of two important organizations — the Pune Sarvajanik Sabha (1870) and the Indian Association (1876) in Calcutta — and the latter of the Madras Mahajan Sabha (1884) and the Bombay Presidency Association (1885). In 1885 was also born the Indian National Congress which quickly became almost synonymous with the freedom struggle, led it to a successful culmination and dominated India's politics for three decades after Independence in 1947, and again from 1980 to 1989, and which remains an important force in national politics.

The discontent that gave rise to political activism and the freedom struggle also helped to sharpen the focus of Indian nationalism, as did the conflict between the imperial government and the freedom struggle. The latter intensified with time. An important early watershed was the movement against the Partition of Bengal effected by the Viceroy, Lord Curzon in 1905. The idea was to break the back of the politically dominant Bengali *bhadralok* by splitting their province into two and turning them into a minority in each half. The second aim was to woo the more reactionary and landed section of the Muslims by projecting the Partition as a move to benefit them by creating a Muslim majority state with Dhaka as its capital.

The anti-Partition agitation led to a qualitative change in Indian politics. The holding of meetings and drawing up of petitions gave way to direct action in the form of street demonstrations, *hartals* or general strikes, and picketing of shops selling foreign goods. The latter was done in pursuance of the policy of *Swadeshi* which involved the boycott of imported products, particularly cotton textiles from Britain, and a conscious policy of buying goods produced in India. It also led to the first major manifestation of tension between Hindus and Muslims. While a large section of the latter supported the Partition as a move beneficial to them, the poor Muslim peasants resisted attempts to enforce boycott as imported cloth was cheaper. The result was the communal riots in East Bengal mentioned above and a worsening of Hindu-Muslim relations caused by the exploitation of Hindu Zamindars and their efforts in the 1880s to ban cow slaughter in their estates.

To a very considerable extent, the worsening of Hindu-Muslim ties was a result of the conscious British policy of divide-and-rule and of trying to use Muslims as a counterpoise to Hindus. An important step in implementing it was the encouragement of the Muslim demand for separate electorates and the granting of it in the Indian Councils Act of 1909. This, perhaps more than any other single move, put the country on the path to Partition. One must temper one's campaign rhetoric in a general electorate to gain the support of as wide a cross-section as possible. No such restraint is at work when one addresses an audience comprising almost exclusively of one's

co-religionists when extremist groups compete for votes in an environment increasingly charged with communalism.

Two factors helped the British in their designs. First, Muslims who had initially sulked against the British who had replaced them as rulers in most parts of India, began to get apprehensive of the growing Hindu hold over the lower echelons of the British administration and domination of professions like law, engineering, medicine, teaching and so on. Led by men like Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan, founder of the Aligarh Anglo-Muhammadian Oriental College (1875) which became an important centre of Muslim separatism, they reacted by going in for Western education and trying to cultivate the British who, in turn, patronized them. The second factor was the stridently anti-Muslim mind-set and rhetoric of some of the Hindu leaders of the second half of the nineteenth century and the essentially Hindu ethos of an important stream of Indian nationalism.

MANY STREAMS, MANY SOURCES

It is important to have a good look at this stage at the main strands of Indian nationalist thought. Nationalism was the principal vehicle of political mobilization during the freedom struggle. It, therefore, had an important bearing on the sweep of that mobilization and the character not only of the freedom struggle but also of the post-Independence polity. It would be useful in this context to dwell on Partha Chatterjee's discussion of what he calls the two alternative forms of 'national' history.⁴² One was a history of the *bharatbarshiya*, assuming a classical Aryan past and centred in northern India, and the other of Bengalis of many *jatis* of uncertain origin which held out the possibility of a different imagining of nationhood. Chatterjee holds that it is difficult to explore the possibilities of the latter in positive terms because it has been submerged in the last hundred years by a tidal wave of historical memory about Arya-Hindu-Bharatvarsha. He, however, cites examples like Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay distinguishing between the rules of the Pathans and the Mughals, calling the former an ally and the latter an enemy, and Krishnachandra Ray who compared the rules of the sultans and nawabs with that of the East India Company and stated that the former placed no hindrance to people of the country holding high office. He also dwells on the process of the 'nationalization' of the nawabs of Bengal which reached its culmination in Akshaykumar Maitreya's *Sirajad-daula*. He concludes from these that 'it would be impossible, according to this line of thinking, to club Pathan and Mughal rule together and call it the Muslim period, and begin the story of the spread of Islam in Bengal with "Muhammad instructed his followers to take up the sword and destroy the infidels".'⁴³

Chatterjee very correctly cautions against applying omnibus labels to periods of Indian history and nursing simplistic, stereotypical perceptions of

origins of events and processes, both of which have an important bearing on the question of India's nationalism in terms of the exclusions they imply. The issue has a critical bearing on any analysis of what some regard as the failure to evolve a common Indian nationalism, embracing the diverse communities of the subcontinent, particularly Hindus and Muslims, which led to the birth of Pakistan.

One may begin with Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, the well-known novelist, critic, social commentator and essayist of nineteenth century Bengal, who is often considered to be the fountainhead of Hindu fundamentalist nationalism. His nationalism was doubtless steeped in Hindu idiom and profoundly influenced by Hindu philosophy, scriptures and ideals. He visualized India as mother. A literal translation of the title and refrain of his famous song *Bande Mataram*, which inspires Indians even today, into English would be 'Salutation to the mother'. While his writings have passages harshly critical of Muslims and his ideal person was Sri Krishna, he did not, as Amalek Tripathi persuasively argues in his *The Extremist Challenge*, impart the communal strain to extremist thought. 'Bankim's target is not the upright Moslem but the decadent tyrant. The question of prejudice might have arisen if he had dealt unjustly with an Akbar or a Hussain Shah. But he was portraying an Aurangzeb or a Kartlukhan. He was more severe with decadent Hindus. How often was the dream of a Hindu kingdom shattered by failure or lack of Hindu character.'⁴⁴

Tripathi's contention is reinforced by the fact that, as indicated by Partha Chatterjee with an English translation of an extract, Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay considered Pathans as friends and Mughals as enemies. Surely, a Muslim-hating Hindu communalist would not draw such a distinction; nor would he invest the characters of Osman and Ayesha with the kind of nobility he did in his famous novel *Durgeshmardini*. While Bankimchandra was a wrong example, there was, nevertheless, a strong element of Hindu revivalism in extremist thought which influenced a powerful and militant section of the freedom movement and which had three of its principal protagonists in Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and Bepin Chandra Pal. Aurobindo Ghose (later Sri Aurobindo) declared: 'Swaraj as the fulfillment of the ancient life of India under modern conditions, the return of the *Satyayuga* of national greatness, the resumption by her of her great role of the teacher and guide, the self-liberation of the people for the final fulfilment of the Vedantic ideals in politics, this is the true Swaraj for India.'⁴⁵ Bepin Chandra Pal considered politics in India to be a spiritual movement. According to him, 'It has its application in social, in economic, in political life of the sublime Philosophy of the Vedanta. It means the desire to carry the message of freedom . . .'⁴⁶

Hindu revivalism was often accompanied by a strong anti-Muslim stance, which is most visible in Swami Dayananda's approach. In many ways socially progressive, his was a Hindu counter-crusade characterized by strident attacks on Islam, Christianity, Jainism, Buddhism and even Puranic Hinduism. He

profoundly influenced Aurobindo Ghose who considered him to be a 'warrior in God's world'. Ghose further stated, 'Here was one who did not infuse himself informally into the indeterminate soul of things, but stamped his figure indelibly as in bronze on men and things . . . As I regard the figure of this formidable artisan in God's workshop, images crowd on me which are all of battle and work and conquest and triumphant labour.'⁴⁷ Not surprisingly, one runs into strident anti-Muslim expressions even in Ghose's writings. When communal riots broke out in East Bengal over attempts by Hindus to enforce *Swadeshi* which the Muslims resisted, his paper *Bande Mataram* was among those which spread wild rumour and communal hysteria and exhorted Hindus to resort to force.⁴⁸

While Muslims had reason to be apprehensive of early extremist nationalist thought, the latter never came to dominate the freedom struggle. Perhaps the most important reason for this was the influence that Mahatma Gandhi, profoundly committed to Hindu-Muslim unity, came to exercise over it. He articulated his views with remarkable lucidity and unambiguity. 'India', he wrote in *Hind Swaraj*, 'cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions live in it. The introduction of foreigners does not necessarily destroy the nation; they merge in it. A country is one nation only when such a condition obtains in it. That country must have a faculty for assimilation. India has ever been such a country. In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals; but those who are conscious of the spirit of nationality do not interfere with one another's religion. If they do, they are not fit to be considered a nation. If the Hindus feel that India should be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in a dreamland. The Hindus, the Mahomedans, the Parsis and the Christians who have made India their home are fellow countrymen, and they will have to live in unity, if only for their own interest.'⁴⁹

The need for Hindu-Muslim unity and harmony was also strongly recognized by Rabindranath Tagore. He wrote with a clear reference to the tension caused during the movement against the Partition of Bengal:

We have to prevent self-partition with even greater vigour than we have displayed to prevent the Partition of Bengal. Let a person who is weak in respect to another not try to console himself by becoming aggressive towards his relative. . . . The scimitar of a great severance is hanging over the head of the country. For hundreds of years we Hindus and Muslims have sat on the two knees of our motherland and enjoyed the same love. Yet even then there is hindrance to our union.

We will not be able to realise any great hope of our country, and the discharge of all our national duties will become difficult at every step, as long as the cause of this weakness survives.

We will not be afraid if an effort is made from outside to turn the difference between Hindus and Muslims into a conflict — we will be able to overcome the tension created by others if we can overcome the

sin of schismatic thought in us. . . . There can be no doubt that a bigger share of governmental jobs and honours has come to us because we have from the beginning learnt our lessons by heart with greater concentration in the Englishman's school. A difference has thus grown between us. There will be no genuine union of hearts between us, and a barrier of hatred will remain, unless this is ended. There will be equality between us and the kind of unpleasantness that exists between unequally placed kin will end, if Muslims get sufficient jobs and status. Let us pray happily that a large share of the palace we have so far enjoyed go to the Muslims Whatever it is, we have to make whatever sacrifice, show whatever tolerance and self-control, that is needed to bind Hindus and Muslims, the two main segments of India, in one united state.⁵⁰

Tagore's attitude towards Muslims stemmed from his conception of India as a shrine on the shores of a great ocean of humanity which has been enriched by streams of people pouring in throughout history. Even all those who came as conquerors, he said in his famous poem *Bharat Teertha* (The Shrine of India), 'exist in my heart' and 'my blood resonates with their diverse melodies'. He called upon Aryans, non-Aryans, Hindus, Muslims, Britishers, Christians, Brahmins, the fallen, to rush to participate in the festival of installing the mother in the shrine. The holy jar has yet to be filled with the water of the shrine made pure by everyone's touch.⁵¹ Tagore's conception of the ocean of humanity, again, flowed from his universalism derived from his profound faith in the Upanishads which holds that the Universal Consciousness or *Brahman* is present in all human beings as their individual soul, *Atman*.

Tagore's philosophy, if one can say so, was Upanishadic humanism with a strong element of mysticism and deeply influenced by the *Bhakti* cult. This as well as his approach to Muslims and life was in keeping with the synthesizing ethos of the *Adi* (Original) Brahmo Samaj to which he belonged. Mahatma Gandhi's was a simpler form of Hinduism, infused with the tolerance inherent in the latter's creed, characterized by a sharp awareness of the way Indian society worked and a pragmatism that did not cross the boundaries of truth and morality. Nehru, in contrast, was an agnostic, a modern secularist to whom religious differences were irrelevant. His opposition to a country defining its identity in terms of a religion made the idea of a Hindu India repugnant to him. On 1 October 1947, a few weeks after Independence, he said at a public meeting in Delhi that Fascism was gripping India where there was a demand for a Hindu State. But he, the new prime minister, would not be party to such reactionary views. He believed in Congress values, and if such values were not acceptable to the people now, they could have another prime minister. He would not change his beliefs for any number of votes.⁵² A highly sensitive individual, a sort of Marxian humanist, his respect for all human beings, including Muslims, stemmed from his respect for the sanctity of the individual and human life. His secularism was also a product of his

deep understanding of Indian and world history which showed him the havoc that untrammelled religious passions and hatred could work. In a letter dated 22 August 1946 to the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, he expressed profound shock over the Great Calcutta killing which ranged for a week from 16 August, the Muslim League's Direct Action Day, and declared, 'We shall continue to reason with Hindu, Muslim and Sikh and others and try to win them over to the path of friendly cooperation, for there is no other way for the advancement of India.'⁵³

The well-springs and character of the worldviews of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru were different. Yet both agreed on the need for religious tolerance and harmony among the religious communities inhabiting India. Under their influence, the ideals of religious tolerance and secularism increasingly informed the policies and pronouncements of the Congress. The process was also helped considerably by the fact that even leaders like C.R. Das, Subhas Chandra Bose and Sarat Chandra Bose, while sharply differing from Gandhi and Nehru on many issues, were firmly in favour of Hindu-Muslim unity and enjoyed the confidence of many important Muslim leaders. Another important factor influencing the outlook of Congressmen was the presence in the party of that outstanding leader, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who combined profound Islamic scholarship with a modern vision enshrining religious harmony, and who tirelessly opposed Islamic separatism.

THE REAL CAUSES

An element of hyperbole and exaggeration tends invariably to mark expressions of nationalism which is essentially experienced as an emotional phenomenon. Every brand of nationalism has its extremist formulation. It should not be surprising if India's also has it. Much more important, however, is the fact that the nationalism of the dominant leaders of the freedom struggle was inclusive rather than exclusive and tended to regard Muslims as an integral part of the nation who were to be cherished as siblings.

One cannot, therefore, blame the character of Indian nationalism or even its extreme manifestations for the rise of Muslim separatism and the country's eventual partition. Both were results of complex circumstances. The harsh fact was that large sections of both Hindus and Muslims of the subcontinent were communal; economic factors created as well as reinforced adversary communal perceptions. Exploitation of Muslim peasants by Hindu landlords in East Bengal led to simmering discontent and riots such as those sparked by efforts to enforce *Swadeshi* during the movement against the Partition of Bengal. Competition for government jobs, a result of very poor economic development and continuing drain of India, generated strong undercurrents of tension.

The communal riots which broke out increasingly frequently stoked hatred, deepened the reservoirs of grievance on both sides, and reinforced mutual suspicion and apprehensions. It all this made a large section of Muslims

apprehensive about their position in a Hindu-majority post-Independent India, the elite of the community feared that their leadership aspirations would not be realized in it. And, finally, there was the inexorable logic of the separate communal electorates and the mutually aggravating communal politics it tended to produce. And, of course, the British always did their bit. They had not only encouraged and granted the Muslim demand for separate communal electorates but had a hand in the formation of the Muslim League in Dhaka in December 1906, with Nawab Salimullah of Dhaka and other feudal elements playing a leading role.

Serious effort was, of course, made by both Hindus and Muslims to bridge the communal divide. The outcome was the Lucknow Pact of 1916 between the Congress and the Muslim League which conceded the latter's demand for separate electorates and the principle of representation to the minorities in excess of their population. It owed much to the efforts by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Annie Besant on the Congress side, and Raja of Mahmudabad, Wazir Hasan, M.A. Jinnah, Mazhar-ul-Huq and A.K. Fazlul Huq on the side of the Muslim League — but did not last long. Another major effort was made towards achieving Hindu-Muslim unity when Mahatma Gandhi's efforts led to the merger of the non-cooperation movement with the *Khilafat* movement protesting against the post World War I dismemberment of Turkey and the divestment of its Caliph, whom they venerated as their spiritual leader, of control over the holy places of Islam. His unilateral withdrawal of the non-cooperation movement after the murder of twenty-two policemen in Chauri Chaura in Bihar in February 1922, however, annoyed the *Khilafat* leaders and his initiative fizzled out.

Things continued to slide downhill. The Communal Award of 1932 carved up legislatures both at the Centre and in the states between various 'communities' and interests — Muslims, depressed classes, Sikhs, Europeans, and the 'general population' of Hindus, as well as 'special' constituencies of landholders, workers, women and dons. It also stated that the seats allotted to each of these groups were meant to reflect their 'importance', which in colonialspeak meant their loyalty to the Raj.

The feudal and fundamentalist Muslim leaders doubtless faced a strong challenge from modern and younger leaders like M.A. Jinnah, the Raja of Mahmudabad, Wazir Hussain, Mazhar-ul-Huq and A.K. Fazlul Huq. They were educated, had some sort of links with the Congress at one stage and were by no stretch of imagination dyed-in-the-wool fundamentalists. The latter, however, did not present a united front; nor could they sustain themselves independently against the forces of Muslim separatism. They found alliance with the Congress difficult even before the announcement of the Communal Award. The reasons ranged from personal ambition to conflict of social interests. In the case of A.K. Fazlul Huq who set up the Krishak Praja Party (Peasant-Tenant Party), and the younger and more radical Muslim leaders around him, the reason was the anti-peasant attitude of the Bengali

bhadralok including those in the Congress. As Joya Chatterji shows, their moment of disillusionment with the Congress came with the discussion of the Bengal Tenancy Amendment Bill in 1928 'when all sections of the Congress Swarajya Party united to oppose the legislation which aimed at strengthening the position of the tenants against *zamindars*'. As they saw it, 'Congress could now claim to represent merely the rich, the landed gentry and educated minority. It had still not earned the right to lead the workers and the peasants.'⁵⁴

That they had reasons for coming to such a conclusion was shown in February 1937, when, after the elections to the new Bengal Legislative Assembly held under the provisions of the Government of India Act of 1935, negotiations began between the Krishak Praja Party (KPP) and the Congress, informal allies during the elections, for forming a government. Trouble arose over what was to be the government's first priority. According to the Congress, it had to be the release of the detenus and the ministry was to be prepared to resign on the issue. According to the KPP, it had to be the peasants' welfare. The KPP, which had pledged in its election manifesto to release the detenus, argued that resignation on the issue of the release of the detenus could jeopardize the peasants' interests. The Congress leadership dithered and finally Fazlul Huq formed a coalition government with the Muslim League, its opponent in the previous election, and assumed office on 1 April as the first premier of Bengal.⁵⁵

The Congress as a whole, however, could not be dismissed as anti-peasant and anti-poor. Mahatma Gandhi virtually launched his political career in India by taking up the causes of the peasants of Bihar's Champaran district, the textile mill workers of Ahmedabad and the peasants of Gujarat's Kheda district — in that order. His subsequent initiation of work for the upliftment of the tribals, Dalits and peasants in the Bardoli taluqa of Gujarat's Surat district and lifelong concern for ensuring dignity and fairplay to the Dalits, were expressions of his deep concern for the disprivileged. And, if words are needed, nothing can be more haunting than his own:

I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt, or the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore to him a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj for the hungry and the spiritually starving millions?

Then you will find your doubts and yourself melting away.⁵⁶

Mahatma Gandhi's deep and abiding concern for the poor could not be without influence on a large section in the Congress; even those who did not share his concern hardly had the moral courage to challenge him on this issue. Even in Bengal, the *bhadralok* as a category was not indifferent to the

plight of the poor. Although editor Hare Chandra Mukherjee, the antipodal editor of the *Hindu Patriot* and a member of the *Madhab*, was dealing with a Christian priest, Reverend James Long, in a lengthy campaign against the savage exploitation of labour in Assam and Bihar by European rubber planters, Dindanath Mukherjee's 1905 *New Dawn* (Mukherjee's *Indragol*) vividly portrayed the brutality of the latter. Dwadkanath Ganguli, a well-known social reformer and husband of Kadambini Ganguly — who with Anandibai Joshi were the first women doctors of the British empire — played a leading role in organizing indentured tea-parden labourers of Assam. The attitude of the dominant minority of the *Madhab* and their counterparts elsewhere, however, ranged from the indifferent to the contemptuous and hostile, the latter when their economic interest clashed. This was particularly so in respect of peasants because most of the *Madhab* were landowners increasingly hit by fragmentation and sub-infeudation, of landlords. Besides, several important Congressmen were heavily dependent on financial and other support from leading landlords for conducting their political activity. The professionals — lawyers, doctors and so on — who were in the Congress often shared the same social circle as the landlords, and often came from landed families themselves. It was hardly surprising then that Bengal Congress had to give priority to the interest of the landlords when Fazlul Huq and other leaders of the KPP were negotiating and interacting with them.

It is tempting to speculate what might have happened if the Congress and the KPP had united to form a government in 1937. It could perhaps have prevented a coalition between the KPP and Muslim League, and consequently, a consolidation of Muslim separatist forces. This, in turn, may have prevented Partition. On the other hand, the experience of working together, which was more likely than not to have led to constant friction because of the conflict of interest between the KPP and the Congress, might have eventually pushed the former into the arms of the Muslim League, albeit at a later date. The contentious existence and final collapse of the progressive coalition, which had Fazlul Huq as premier and comprised the Forward Bloc, a number of KPP members of the Bengal Legislative Assembly and the Hindu Mahasabha — led by one of the tallest Bengali leaders of all times, Dr Shyamaprasad Mukherjee — cautions against jumping to conclusions.

Besides there were the developments in the United Provinces (now roughly Uttar Pradesh) and undivided Punjab. In the United Provinces, communalism developed as the ideology of what Bipan Chandra calls, after K.M. Ashraf, the *jagirdari* elements — landlords, *zamindars* and aristocracy in general — as well as moneylenders, the bureaucratic elite (serving or retired higher officials) and, in some areas, merchants.⁵⁷ In the 1870s and 1880s, these elements among both Hindus and Muslims had tried to develop common secular politics along class lines in defence of their socio-economic position against the challenge posed by the rising modern middle classes and the Congress. While the latter demanded open competition for government

jobs and election to the legislatures, the *jagirdari* elements demanded the retention of the principle of nomination in respect of both. Their efforts to mobilize support in the name of traditional leadership, the principle of superiority by birth and land-holding failed; they were unwilling to oppose colonialism, the real cause of their decline, as that would have cost them whatever social and economic position they still retained. Sir Sayyid Ahmed then began organizing Muslim *jagirdari* elements to widen the social base of their support in the name of religion and community. The foundation of the Muslim League was a further step in this direction. 'From then on the Jagirdari elements fought for communal power, for communal reservation and for separate electorates to safeguard their interests which they could not have done in an open, class form even under the limited franchise of 1909, 1919 and 1935.'⁵⁸

Nevertheless, Hindu and Muslim *jagirdari* elements in UP worked together in defence of their class interests in the Oudh Association and the British India Association of UP and in the *Aman Sabhas* (peace meetings) organized by the British to counter the first non-cooperation movement. Later in the 1920s and 1930s, they successfully protected their class interests, especially in relation to tenancy and rent legislation, by working through landlords' parties in the provincial legislature. The elections of 1937 changed all that. 'Thoroughly defeated, their political parties could no longer defend their interests precisely at a time when the Congress's programme of agrarian reform, including the reduction or rent, enhancement of tenants' security and abolition of *zamindari*, threatened their basic interests.'⁵⁹ Muslim landlords of UP then moved almost *en masse* to the Muslim League and their Hindu counterparts tended to gravitate to the Hindu Mahasabha. In 1940 Muslim League declared the creation of Pakistan to be its goal.

In Punjab, both Hindu and Muslim landlords were united in the Unionist Party which successfully defended their interests against Hindu, Muslim and Sikh tenants as well as merchants and moneylenders. The Muslim League, which was weak in the province until 1937, however, established close links with Muslim elements in the Unionist Party between 1937 and 1943. It was helped not only by a nationwide surge of communal sentiments but the growing feeling among Muslim landlords that the Unionist Party, a provincial organization, would not be able to protect them against the radicalism of the Congress.⁶⁰ By 1944-5, the League had won over most of the important Muslim landlord families of Punjab as well as the leading *Pirs* and *Sayyada Nashins* who had large holdings attached to their shrines. The Unionist Party was trounced in the 1946 elections.

Events were now moving inexorably towards the creation of Pakistan driven by a process whose stages of progress and the underlying motive forces can be clearly delineated. Defence of vested interests led to organization along communal lines for governmental power; a taste of the latter as well as the need to cope with growing threats to the vested interests, further whetted

the appetite for governmental power. This, under the influence of the exclusionary and increasingly extremist rhetoric of the politics of separate communal electorates, further sharpened communal feelings and hostility towards the rival community — Hindus in the case of Muslims and vice-versa. The result was a continuous intensification and embitterment of communal politics which, along with Britain's machinations, made Partition inevitable. The upper and middle class white-collar elements could have done little to stop it.

Retrospective speculation is often pointless and passing judgement on people by hindsight not available to them can be unfair. If the Bengali *bhadralok*, and particularly those of them in the Congress, behaved in a selfish and shortsighted manner during their negotiations with Fazlul Huq and his supporters, it should not make one forget their earlier seminal contribution. As seen earlier, they and their counterparts elsewhere in India had launched agitations which had gradually coalesced and evolved into the freedom movement. In the initial stages, they provided both the leaders and the rank-and-file of the latter. The fierce agitation against the Partition of Bengal radicalized Bengali society and politics, and led to the rise of militant nationalism as well as revolutionary terrorism. It did not, however, expand the social base of the freedom struggle significantly. It was only Mahatma Gandhi who, in the second and third decades of the twentieth century, catalyzed the increasingly powerful latent desire of the masses to participate in the freedom struggle and gave the latter the character of a mass movement. Besides, while Dr Kadambini Ganguly became the first woman to address an open session of the Congress as early as 1894, and many *bhadralok* women had come out in support of the anti-Partition agitation, it was again Mahatma Gandhi who persuaded women from disprivileged families and the villages to plunge into the freedom struggle.

Even after the advent of Mahatma Gandhi, however, the leadership of the freedom movement remained in the hands of the white-collar upper and middle classes. As long as the language of negotiation with the colonial rulers at various levels remained English, their knowledge of the language gave them a natural advantage over the masses who generally spoke only their mother tongue. So did their education, their capacity for abstract thought and conceptualization of situations and developments, skill in organization and articulation and familiarity with the forms and techniques of agitation and mobilization. Besides, the legislatures with very limited powers which the British established under the Indian Councils Act of 1892 and 1909 and the Government of India Act of 1919 were based on restricted franchise. This put them beyond the reach of the masses and made them the preserves of the white-collar upper and middle classes. The Government of India Act of 1935 greatly expanded the number of voters though stopping far short of establishing adult franchise. The Communal Award of 1932 and the Poona Pact between Mahatma Gandhi and B.R. Ambedkar,¹ on

which the composition of the legislatures at the Centre and in the provinces was based under the Government of India Act of 1935, however, made it almost impossible for the *bhadralok* to retain their grip on these in Bengal and some of the other provinces. The *bhadralok* knew their twilight was approaching and the structures of power, privilege and economic survival they had built up were increasingly at stake.

To a large extent their decline was engineered by the British through the establishment of legislatures, electorate and franchises aimed at clipping their wings while providing some kind of sop for Indian demands for a greater say in Government. They also encouraged Muslim communal and separatist politics to achieve the same end. The failure of the British lay in their inability to prevent India's independence; their success, if one can call it that, lay in the Partition of India. There has been a tendency to blame the nationalist intelligentsia, particularly those in the Congress, for failure to prevent Partition. It is nobody's contention that they made no mistakes or were above self-interest. It would, however, be grossly unhistorical to blame Partition primarily on their subjective weakness and perversity.

The fact is that the white-collar upper and middle classes had served the country remarkably well. They gave the Congress and the country leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Vithalbhai Patel, C. Rajagopalachari, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Subhas Chandra Bose, Sarat Chandra Bose, Nabakrushna Choudhury, Gobind Ballabh Pant, Rajendra Prasad, Gopabandhu Das, Abdul Gaffar Khan, T. Prakasam, J.B. Kripalani, Sarojini Naidu, Jayaprakash Narayan and so on. Going further back in time one encounters names like Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Madhav Govind Ranade, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai, Bepin Chandra Pal, Surendranath Banerjee, C.R. Das, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, R.C. Dutt, Aurobindo Ghose and so on. It is a long list of distinguished men. The leaders of the communist and socialist movements in the country have also come from the ranks of the white-collar upper and middle classes. M.N. Roy (who later repudiated Communism) S.A. Dange, P.C. Joshi, A.K. Gopalan, Ajoy Ghose, Rajeshwara Rao, B.T. Ranadive, E.M.S. Namboodiripad, P. Ramamurthi, S. Basavapunnaiiah, Jyoti Basu, Indrajit Gupta and Bhowani Sen and Aruna Asaf Ali are some of the people whose names instantly come to the mind. The outstanding socialist leaders drawn from this category have been Acharya Narendra Deva, Jayaprakash Narayan, Achyut Patwardhan, Yusuf Meherally, Rammanohar Lohia, N.G. Goray, S.M. Joshi, J.B. Kripalani and Asoka Mehta.

THE WHITE-COLLAR AND THE SUBALTERN

The white-collar upper and middle classes also provided the trade union movement with its leaders. In 1870, Sasipada Banerjee, a Brahmo social

reformer, set up a working-men's club and started a monthly journal called *Bharat Sramjeebi* (Indian Labour) in Calcutta.⁶² Eight years later, Sorabjee Shapoorji Bengalee failed in his attempt to introduce a Bill in the Bombay Legislative Council limiting working hours for labour.⁶³ In 1880, Narayan Meghajee Lokhanday began publishing an Anglo-Marathi weekly called *Dina Bandhu* (Friend of the Poor) and started the Bombay Mill and Millhands' Association in 1890.⁶⁴ In 1886, Dwarkanath Ganguly and the Brahmo spiritual leader, Sivnath Shastri, toured Assam and returned with horrific stories of exploitation and physical torture of tea-garden workers by planters. Bengal delegates tried to have a discussion of the Assam Coolie Act, which permitted such barbarities, at the Madras and Allahabad Congress sessions in 1887 and 1888 respectively. The plea was turned down on both occasions on the ground that it was a provincial subject. They set up a new organization, the Bengal Provincial Conference which, at its first session in 1888, passed a resolution calling for an amendment of the Act in question.

Strikes began to occur with increasing frequency, an early landmark being the one by the signallers of the Great Indian Peninsular Railway in May 1899. It was supported by all nationalist papers, particularly Tilak's *Mahratta* and *Kesari*.⁶⁵ An organized trade union movement began to emerge in many parts of the country. A major development was Mahatma Gandhi's establishment of the Ahmedabad Textile Labour Association in 1918 with 14,000 members.⁶⁶ The All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) was set up in 1920 by B.G. Tilak, who had close ties with Bombay mill workers, with Lala Lajpat Rai as president.⁶⁷ Dewan Chaman Lall presided over its second session and C.R. Das over the third and fourth. Among others closely associated with it were Jawaharlal Nehru, C.F. Andrews, J.M. Sengupta, Subhas Chandra Bose and Satyamurthi. In 1920, India had 125 trade unions with a total membership of 250,000.⁶⁸ In 1939, the figure had risen to 562 unions with a total membership of 399,159.⁶⁹ By then, however, the movement had undergone many vicissitudes. The first occurred in 1929 when N.M. Joshi, Mrinal Kanti Bose, Dewan Chaman Lall and others left the AITUC because of growing communist domination and later that year established the Indian Trade Union Federation (ITUF).⁷⁰ Following the Sixth Congress of the Comintern's enunciation of a line of uncompromising opposition to the national bourgeoisie, which meant severance of links with the Congress, the communist group in the AITUC, led by B.T. Ranadive and S.V. Deshpande, split and formed the Red Trade Union Congress (RTUC).⁷¹ An initiative for unity floated by the Congress Socialist Party led to a joint conference on co-operation being held in February 1935 by the AITUC and the National Trade Union Federation (NTUF), the successor of ITUF.⁷² The RTUC returned to the AITUC in the following April in accordance with the United Front line adumbrated by Georgi Dimitrov at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in 1935. The NTUF followed suit in 1938.

Throughout these upheavals, as indeed throughout the ones which followed until Independence in 1947, the year which also saw the formation of the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), the central trade union organization of the Indian National Congress, the leadership of the trade union movement remained with people with white-collar upper- and middle-class background. The same category of people were also frequently involved in peasant movements, but these often erupted as spontaneous expressions of subaltern fury. We have noted earlier instances of unrest in the countryside caused by the oppressive nature of British rule, the savagery of the European indigo planters, exploitation by *zamindars* and moneylenders, the crippling burden of taxes on peasants, and specific local causes. We have also noted the role played by Hurish Chander Mookerjee and Dina Bandhu Mitra in exposing the barbarism of the indigo planters. In 1873-4, the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, under the leadership of M.G. Ranade, had organized a successful campaign by peasants in Pune and Mumbai against the land revenue settlement of 1867 which had suddenly increased land revenue by 50 per cent.⁷¹ The Maharashtrian intelligentsia also supported the movement against moneylenders which erupted in December 1874 and which, beginning with social boycott, led to agrarian riots in May 1875.

Mapilla uprisings were endemic in Malabar. In 1893-4, the plains of Assam witnessed a series of peasant riots sparked by high land-revenue assessments. These were crushed through police firing and brutal bayonet charges.⁷² Perhaps the most significant uprising of the post-1857 revolt was the one by Munda tribals on the Bengal-Bihar border in 1899-1900. Led by the charismatic Birsa Munda it was entirely subaltern in character and was crushed by severe use of force.

The peasant movement, however, received a massive boost when Mahatma Gandhi participated in the struggles in Champaran district in Bihar and Kheda district in Gujarat. The Uttar Pradesh Kisan Sabha was set up in February 1918. By the summer of 1920 *kisan* meetings called by village panchayats had become quite frequent in the *taluqdari* areas of Awadh. The Sabha organized several major agitations. In August 1921, the violent Mapilla rebellion erupted in Malabar following a raid by the district magistrate of Eranad on the famous Mambrath mosque to arrest an important *Khilafat* leader, Ali Musaliar, who also happened to be the priest of the mosque. Initially directed against landlords who were primarily Hindus and symbols of governmental authority like courts, it became almost entirely communalized as mounting repression drove them to desperation. Harsh repression finally crushed it in December 1921.

The peasant movement in India came to have a radical segment with the advent of the communists as an organized force in the 1920s. A Communist Party of India was formed in Tashkent in October 1920 under the leadership of M.N. Roy who later turned out to be one of the most outstanding colonial critics of Marxism and philosopher of Radical Humanism, a philosophy of

freedom. A Communist Party of India was also formed in Bombay in December 1925. The various organizations the communists had forged in the provinces to work among peasants and workers were renamed Workers and Peasants Party (WPP) and knit into an all-India organization which made considerable progress through the tactic of co-operation with what was then emerging as the left-wing of the Congress.

They, however, soon suffered a setback. The first cause of this was severe government repression which culminated in the banning of the Communist Party in 1934. The second was the anti-Congress line they took following the Sixth Congress of the Comintern which laid down a strident line against the national bourgeoisie. Moreover, they wound up the WPPs on the ground that such two-class (workers and peasants) parties were vulnerable to bourgeoisie influence.

Meanwhile, the Great Depression (1929–32) and the steep fall in the price of cash crops had hit the peasants hard while the Civil Disobedience movement of 1930–1, in which peasants had participated in large numbers, had sharpened their political consciousness and created a mood of militancy among them. The communists too returned to the line of co-operation with the Congress following the United Front strategy outlined at the Seventh Congress of the Comintern in 1935, and joined the Congress Socialist Party, formed in 1934 under the aegis of Jayaprakash Narayan, Acharya Narendra Dev and Minoo Masani. An offshoot of the consolidation of left-wing forces this facilitated was the formation of the All India Kisan Congress, which later changed its name to the All India Kisan Sabha, in Lucknow in April 1936. Swami Sahajanand, the well-known peasant leader from Bihar, was its first president. Among those who attended its first session were Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr Ram Monohar Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan, Sohan Singh Josh, Indulal Yagnik and others.

The years which followed saw further spread and radicalization of the peasant movement which received a fillip from the defeat of many *zamindars* in the 1937 elections at the hands of Congress candidates, and the liberal policies pursued by the Congress governments which came into power in the various provinces following the elections. Meanwhile, the communists were also regaining their lost ground. In the midst of all this came 1939 and World War II. In keeping with Moscow's stand, the communists called it an imperialist war and plunged into opposition to it which continued until 1941 when, following Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union, it was dubbed a people's war. The communists' co-operation with the government's war effort increasingly embittered their relations with the Congress. The latter had asked the British two questions when World War II had broken out in September 1939: What would be the shape of the new world order after the war and would it include an independent India? Would India have a foretaste of that freedom while fighting alongside the allies?

The Congress leaders, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru particularly, did not want to add to Britain's difficulties when it was locked

in a mortal combat with Nazism and Fascism. Yet they could not wait indefinitely for a reply. Since the British kept silent, they went in for a kind of token protest in the form of individual *satyagraha*; a total of 30,000 persons, selected personally by Mahatma Gandhi, courted imprisonment during 1940-1. Meanwhile, the quick Japanese advance through South-East Asia had alarmed the British who sent in early 1942 a Labour Minister of the War Cabinet, Sir Stafford Cripps, to find a way out of the deadlock in India. The Cripps mission was a failure and Mahatma Gandhi, who feared a Japanese invasion and felt that Indians would be motivated to defend their country with all their might if they felt the glow of freedom, favoured an immediate declaration of independence. The result was the historic Quit India resolution of 8 August 1942, which visualized a free India resisting external aggression with all the armed and unarmed forces at its disposal and in co-operation with the allies. It called for an immediate struggle to free India and Mahatma Gandhi declared, 'We shall either free India or die in the attempt; we shall not live to see the perpetuation of our slavery.'⁷⁵

Despite the arrest of all the important Congress leaders in a pre-emptive swoop by the Government on the morning of 9 August 1942, there were massive, spontaneous explosions of protest and violence all over the country. The British responded with the harshest of measures including indiscriminate firing on protestors by police and military personnel. While the movement was suppressed after several weeks, anger continued to simmer throughout the country. Communists who, as has been seen, supported the war effort and opposed the Quit India movement, came to be looked upon as traitors and suffered severe erosion of their popular support. On the other hand, the revocation of the ban imposed on them in 1934 and the facilities the government now granted them to operate openly, enabled them to considerably increase their organizational strength and build up strong pockets of influence. Yet they still remained a fringe. Despite the repression launched on it and the imprisonment of almost all its leaders, the Congress remained the party of the overwhelming majority of the people, almost synonymous with the freedom struggle which it had spearheaded for decades under leaders who were heroes in the eyes of almost the entire nation. They became more so as World War II ended and Independence appeared around the corner.

THE EMPIRE AND ITS ANTITHESIS

The causes of the final departure of the British from India have been discussed often and bear mention here only in the briefest of outlines. The organizational muscle, reach and popular support the Congress had built up since its establishment in 1885 was clearly demonstrated during the Quit India movement of 1942. The savage suppression of the latter created bitter resentment throughout the country. The romantic venture of Subhas Chandra Bose who

had fled from captivity in Calcutta, made his way to Japan via Germany, set up the Azad Hind government or government of independent India in exile and formed an Indian National Army (INA) with a section of the troops of the British Indian Army who had become Japanese prisoners of war, sent a wave of thrill throughout the country. The explosive countrywide agitation for the release of some of the officers and men of the INA who had surrendered to the British at the end of World War II and who were being tried for their action during the war, and the mutiny by the ratings of the Royal Indian Navy in February 1946, made it clear to the British that they would be stretched to the extreme if they tried to retain their rule over India. And the war had left them too drained and weakened to even try that. It might still have been different had the Conservatives been in power. As it so happened, the elections at the end of the war saw a Labour government installed in Britain with Clement Attlee as prime minister. The Cabinet Mission arrived in India on 24 March 1946 to negotiate the establishment of a national government and to set in motion a machinery for transfer of power.

The Cabinet Mission's efforts came to naught with the Muslim League rejecting on 29 July 1946, its plan for a constitutional set-up providing for a united India with autonomy for the minorities. This was followed by the Muslim League's call for observing a Direct Action Day on 16 August 1946, when an armed and well-prepared mob of its supporters unleashed pre-planned violence in Calcutta. The Hindus retaliated after having been initially caught unprepared. The result was the Great Calcutta Killing which claimed five thousand lives in less than a week. Violence broke out in other parts of India in the months that followed. Partition of India was now almost an inevitability. Though negotiations were held to prevent it, these proved futile. A truncated India, with West and East Pakistan carved out of it, emerged into Independence on 15 August 1947.

It was a turbulent and traumatic transition, marked by savage mass slaughter, arson and plunder, and journeys of hundreds of thousands of uprooted, dispossessed and devastated humanity across violent lands in search of security. The fear of a total collapse of the administration and an all-encompassing march of anarchy loomed large because communal hatred had entered deep into the souls of those charged with maintaining the peace. Yet the country held; law and order was restored and the business of governance resumed. What is more, the formidable task of integrating the princely states, numbering a little less than 600, into the Indian Union was completed. This was all the more remarkable because the process had been made considerably difficult by the British. Until 1935, the princes were in direct contact with the Governor-General-in-Council, who co-ordinated the administration of India as a whole. The Government of India Act of 1935, however, created the new office of the Crown Representative and put the princes in direct touch with the British crown, severing their traditional relationship with the

Government of India. If this, apart from their exclusion from the federal governmental structure established for British India by the 1935 Act, further underlined their separateness from the rest of India, the Cabinet Mission of 1946, seemed almost deliberately to encourage them to harbour hopes of independence by holding discussions with them and assuring them that the British would under no circumstance transfer paramountcy to an Indian Government. The assurance was repeated in 1947 when the British Government announced that after the lapse of paramountcy on 15 August 1947, all rights surrendered by the princely states to the paramount power would return to them. The implication that they would now enjoy sovereignty and a measure of freedom they never did before, however, was rendered meaningless by another announcement by the British — they would neither retain troops in the subcontinent to carry out the obligations of paramountcy nor admit the princely states as dominions of the British Government, after the dominion governments of India and Pakistan were formed.⁷⁶

The princes realized that their survival in the new situation would depend on the Government of Independent India and their own subjects. Even then it took all of the blend of tact and firmness for which Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, called India's Iron Man, was famous, to persuade all but three of them to sign the Instrument of Accession to India before 14 August 1947. Of the three, the Nawab of Junagadh, the Muslim ruler of a Hindu-majority state who had opted to join Pakistan, fled a few weeks later as Indian troops entered his territory. The subjects held a plebiscite and decided to join India. Kashmir signed the Instrument of Accession in October 1947, with tribal raiders, unleashed by Pakistan, closing in on its capital Srinagar. The Nizam of Hyderabad dragged his feet and allowed an oppressive extremist paramilitary force, the *Razakars*, to capture power. In a police action in 1948, India ousted the *Razakars*, and the Nizam, who was given generous terms, signed the Instrument of Accession.

To a large extent, India could take such tumultuous developments in her stride because of the outstanding character of the country's political leadership and the strength and efficiency of its administrative system. It not only had stalwart leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad but also an army of competent leaders, rising upwards from the village and subdivision to the district and provincial and national levels. Well-versed in political mobilization and propaganda, articulate and knowledgeable in political matters, they gradually took charge in their respective areas.

Most of them came from the ranks of the white-collar upper and middle classes which in turn were a product of the social, economic, administrative, cultural and political developments which occurred under British rule. It is not that none of them could transcend it; in reality only a few did. Equally, the character of the Congress and the freedom struggle itself was shaped by the British. While the negative aspects of the latter were numerous, it was

certainly far less tyrannical than the Tsarist regime in pre-Bolshevik Revolution Russia, Italian rule in Somalia or Belgian in the Congo. Of course, the starry-eyed nineteenth-century Indian moderates who thought that the Englishman's deeds would correspond to his words — particularly those promising the absence of discrimination in the making of public appointments — were quickly disappointed. Their faith in the fairness and effectiveness of British public opinion was often rudely jolted — for example, by the way a large section of Britishers rallied to the support of General Dyer who ordered the notorious mass killing of peaceful demonstrators at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, on 13 April 1919, and the Governor of the province, Sir Michael O'Dwyer who supported him to the hilt. But then Jallianwala Bagh was an aberration; generally, there were certain boundaries which the British tried not to transgress. It was — and is — a vibrant parliamentary democracy whose values had become ingrained in the psyche of its people and rulers. Many British administrators in India and politicians at home genuinely believed that they had a mission in the subcontinent. Some of them like Lord Morley, Secretary of State at the turn of the century and biographer of Lord Gladstone, were liberals and had a bad conscience about Britain's colonial exploitation of India.

As a result, within the bounds set by the logic of colonialism, British rule in India was far less repressive and far more enlightened than the colonial rule of the other countries. Their response even to the revolutionary terrorist movement, which flared between interludes of dormancy from late 1890s to the end of the second decade of the twentieth century and again in the early 1930s, and which was almost exclusively confined to the white-collar middle classes, was, despite measures like the repressive Rowlatt Bill, less inhuman than other colonial responses to similar movements. All this meant that except at times when the revolutionary terrorist movement was in its active phase or of mass upsurges like those during the agitation against the Partition of Bengal (1903–8) and the non-cooperation (1920–2), civil disobedience (1930–1) and the Quit India (1942) movements, the Congress could function openly, maintain its offices and be critical of the government in its publications and meetings. Besides, despite restrictions, the Press also enjoyed a certain measure of freedom. This had two very major consequences. First, the Congress could evolve an open, democratic party in all its internal plurality. It did not become a closed and secretive, centralized and authoritarian body which Russia's Bolshevik Party, organized on the principle of democratic-centralism enunciated by Lenin, became to avoid savage Tsarist repression.

Besides, however limited their powers, the local government bodies — corporations, municipalities, district, union and local boards — as well as the legislatures the British established, helped to turn out leaders well-versed in the functioning of representative institutions and parliamentary practices. Clearly, the roots of India's vibrant post-Independence democracy lay not only in the essential plurality of its culture and civilization but the democratic

34. Mohit Maitra, *A History of Indian Journalism*, National Book Agency, Calcutta, 1993 (2nd rpt), p. 83.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 75.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
37. Under this doctrine the adopted son of an Indian ruler could not succeed the latter to the throne.
38. The expression 'white-collar upper and middle classes' is being used because the term 'white-collar' denotes people who, like the *bhadralok*, are not engaged in manual labour and, by implication, are educated. The words upper middle classes indicate the social categories from which the *bhadralok* come.
39. Sugata Bose and Ayesha Jalal, *op cit.*, p. 99.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 99–100.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 102.
42. Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1993.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 115.
44. Amal Tripathi, *The Extremist Challenge: India Between 1890 and 1910*, Orient Longman Limited, Calcutta, 1967.
45. Quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 29.
46. *Ibid.*
47. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
48. Rajat Kanta Ray, *Social Conflict and Political Unrest in Bengal: 1875–1927*, Oxford University Press, Calcutta, 1984, p. 192.
49. M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj, Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Volume Four, Sriman Narayan (ed.), Navjivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, Reprinted popular edition, 1969, p. 136.
50. Rabindranath Tagore, *Atmashakti O Samuha. Rabindra Rachanabali*, Birth Centenary Edition, vol. 12, Essays, West Bengal Government, Calcutta, Bengali year 1368, English calendar year 1961, pp. 808–10.
51. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, Poems, pp. 280–2.
52. M.J. Akbar, *India: The Siege Within: Challenges to a Nation's Unity*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1985, pp. 233–4.
53. Quoted in Suranjan Das, *Communal Riots in Bengal 1905–1947*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1993, p. 190.
54. Joya Chatterjee, *Bengal Divided: Hindu Communalism and Partition 1931–1947*, Cambridge University Press, published in India by Foundation Books, Delhi, in association with The Book Review Literary Trust, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 29–30.
55. *Ibid.*, pp. 103–4.
56. M.K. Gandhi, *The Penguin Gandhi Reader*, Rudrangshu Mukherjee (ed.), Penguin Books, Delhi, p. 91.
57. Bipan Chandra, *Communalism in Modern India*, Vani Educational Books, Delhi, 1984, p. 79. Chandra refers to an Urdu Publication by K.M. Ashraf.
58. *Ibid.*, pp. 81–2.

59. Ibid., p. 82.
60. Ibid., p. 83.
61. The Poona Pact between Mahatma Gandhi and B.R. Ambedkar provided for the keeping aside of a certain number of Hindu seats for members of the Scheduled Castes. It followed after Mahatma Gandhi had gone on a fast unto death in September 1932, protesting against the British proposal to create separate electorates for the Scheduled Castes.
62. Bipan Chandra and others, op cit., Chapter 17 by Aditya Mukherjee, p. 211.
63. Ibid., p. 210.
64. Ibid., p. 211.
65. Ibid., pp. 112-13.
66. Ibid., p. 218.
67. Ibid., pp. 215-16.
68. Ibid., p. 217.
69. Ibid., p. 221.
70. Gene D. Overstreet and Marshall Windmiller, *Communism in India*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1960, pp. 372-3.
71. Ibid., p. 373.
72. Ibid., p. 373.
73. Bipan Chandra and others, Chapter 3 by Bipan Chandra, op cit., pp. 56-7.
74. Ibid., p. 58.
75. Rudrangshu Mukherjee (ed.), *The Penguin Gandhi*, p. 171.
76. A.K. Chanda, *Federalism in India* George Allen & Unwin Ltd, London, 1965, pp. 30-1.

Part I

Polity

RAVINDER KUMAR

Democracy: From Consolidation to Fluidity

If we turn our gaze upon the polities of Asia and Africa, which were liberated from the imperial yoke in the middle decades of the twentieth century, then we discover that very few of these countries were able to generate liberal and democratic institutions, which were resilient and durable, within their societies in the decades after their liberation. The relative success in creating vigorous and enduring democratic institutions in India, therefore, is a phenomenon which is exceptional rather than usual. Indeed, in one post-colonial society after another, the attempt to set up democratic institutions has either resulted in a surrender to authoritarian or military regimes, or given way to situations of irreversible anarchy and chaos. This is not to suggest that there have been no crises in democratic functioning within India; or that liberal institutions and democratic practice in the country are wholly unflawed. Nevertheless, the general picture which emerges from a review of India's political experience over the past five decades is a picture which suggests that the values and institutions of liberal democracy have taken firm root within the country, with a depth of social acceptance, and a capacity for political innovation, that needs to be explored both for its relevance to the future of Indian society, and for its relevance to humankind as a whole, with special reference to the nations of the developing world.

In this essay, therefore, we seek to explore the reasons behind the success of the democratic experiment in India, in full knowledge of the fact that this success is not altogether without its shortcomings, more particularly as we turn to a new century which also marks a new millennium in world history. To this end we shall dwell, in the first instance, upon the manner in which nationalist thought and modern political practice crystallized within India in the century which preceded the dawn of freedom in 1947; secondly, we shall touch upon the prescriptive framework which the founding fathers of the nation adopted as the Constitution of India in January 1950; and thirdly, we shall explore the first two decades after 1947, as a phase in the recent past of Indian society, in which the social experience of the pre-1947 nationalist consolidation and the guidelines provided by the constitution were fleshed out into the living fabric of democratic practice, through a well-articulated system of governance for the Indian Union as well as for the States of the Indian Union.

Over the past two decades, that is, in the 1980s and the 1990s, the momentum provided by the struggle for freedom has, so it appears, given

way to a new phase of apex politics in the Republic of India: the dominating features of which phase consist of governance, in New Delhi, or in the capital cities of the States, through fragile majorities; or through precarious coalitions, which often disintegrate within a relatively short span of time. It appears, therefore, that liberal institutions have over the past two decades had to face an entirely novel situation; one which calls for new resources in social, political and economic management. Nevertheless, this phase of relative instability is also characterized by a deepening of democratic consciousness in the country; as social empowerment reaches out to the most disadvantageously placed classes in society and draws them into active involvement in the business of shaping the destiny of the nation. These are some of the issues which we shall explore in our attempt to understand the manner in which democratic values and institutions have sunk roots in the country and provide the basis for liberal governance.

THE TWO FOUNDATIONAL CONSTITUENTS

As already stated, to gain an insight into democratic political practice in India we have, in the first instance, to focus upon the growth of a mass movement during the nationalist struggle, in the decades prior to 1947. The historians of colonial India recognize that the British Raj rested upon two different foundational constituents. The formal edifice of the Raj consisted of a well articulated bureaucratic structure: with the viceroy of India at the apex; the provincial governors, the commissioners and the district officers at the mid-dling levels of the empire; and a hierarchy of 'native' officials below the district officer, who presided over the executive and the judiciary, in the tehsils or the talukas, at the local level. While the viceroy was a political appointee, a prominent figure in public life, the provincial governors, the commissioners and the district officers were drawn from a cadre of civil servants selected through a competitive examination, and ideologically located in the ruling logic of nineteenth century imperialism. Below the district officers stood a subordinate native bureaucracy drawn from a 'loyalist' landed gentry, providing a crucial link with indigenous rural society.

No less important than the civil service which underpinned the British Raj were the informal alliances which upheld British rule over the country. There were two or three sections of society, in particular, which made up such informal alliances. The first and foremost of these supporting systems was made up of the rural aristocracy and the landed gentry, whom the British propped up in the provinces of South Asia. In the discourse of imperialism, these two classes were defined as the 'natural' leaders of the people; and their economic interests and political sentiments were formally drawn through their property holdings and social culture into the fabric of the colonial regime.

Besides the landed communities, the edifice of the British empire was sustained by the urban middle class, created through the institutions of

western education set up under colonial aegis. This middle class, the intellectual brainchild of a derivative and rootless Enlightenment, was drawn into the lower rungs of the civil service, or in the liberal professions, which were a part of the new order created under the colonial dispensation. The traditional business communities, too, were offered extended opportunities as junior partners of the British Raj, and were an integral constituent of the middle classes which thrived under colonial rule.

Apart from the political support which the middle classes extended to the colonial dispensation, they played an important role in facilitating the cultural hegemony of the British Raj over the subject society of South Asia. The great bastions of the colonial middle class were the port-cities of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras; from whence the social, political and economic influence of the colonial State reached out to the urban networks of the interior, on the one hand, and a vast rural hinterland, on the other. In this rural hinterland, by the turn of the century, were located more than half a million villages, which provided work and shelter for roughly 75 per cent of a total population of 250 million.

Although we have described the middle classes as the offspring of the colonial dispensation, their stance towards the British Raj was in reality very complex and ambiguous. For two features of the colonial situation need emphasis: first, that the sentiment of nationalism which the middle classes imbibed through western education created in their psyche a desire for political autonomy and a determination to get rid of the ties which bound their country to Great Britain; and secondly, that the opportunities for advancement open to the middle classes under the colonial regime were limited. Within a generation or two, therefore, the middle classes of India moved from a supportive to an oppositional stance toward the colonial State. The trajectory they adopted in pursuit of their aspirations is vividly reflected in their muted opposition to the Great Uprising of 1857. It is also reflected in the manner in which they devised local and regional organizations, proto-nationalist in character, in the third quarter of the nineteenth century; and finally, in 1885, devised a subcontinental body called the Indian National Congress, which regarded itself as a 'Parliament of Indian Nationalism'.

Below the middle and the lower middle strata of Indian society, however, stood severely deprived and voiceless communities which suffered intensely through economic deprivation and social alienation. In the literature of the social sciences, such communities are often described as the 'popular' or the 'subaltern' classes. Who precisely, we may ask ourselves, were the popular classes or the subalterns? They were those deprived sections of Indian society which contributed to social production and wealth generation through hard physical labour: they were peasants with woefully inadequate holdings, or share-croppers, or tenants-at-will, or agricultural labourers, or factory workers, or dalits engaged in artisanal production, or tribal communities drawn into pastoral or hunting economies. These lowly classes were progressively impoverished under

the colonial dispensation; and they were often obliged to abandon their habitats and vocations and drift into novel and lumpenized situations. Such lowly folk experienced deprivation and decline during the late nineteenth century; and their social frustration, plus their hostility towards the colonial State, was repeatedly voiced through local and inadequately organized movements of protest, often violent in character, which the British suppressed with relentless brutality.

—SRI AUROBINDO

By the commencement of the twentieth century, the emerging nationalist leadership in India realized that the task before it lay in creating novel ties of interest and sentiment between the middle classes on the one hand, and the impoverished classes, whom we have described as the subalterns, on the other. The first leader to voice this was Sri Aurobindo who in 1893 stressed the importance of reaching out to (those whom he described as) the 'proletariat' of India. Several anti-imperialist agitations, some constitutional in character, others resting upon heroic acts of revolutionary violence, were initiated in a bid to go beyond earlier middle-class agitations in their social reach to the popular classes. Notable among such agitations was the Swadeshi Movement of 1905: in which regional nationalist figures like Bal Gangadhar Tilak from Maharashtra; or Bipan Chandra Pal from Bengal; or Lala Lajpat Rai from Punjab; attempted to draw the lower middle classes and sections of the peasantry into the nationalist embrace. By the first decade of the twentieth century, therefore, there was a great strengthening of the nationalist cause within India, partly through novel pan-Indian linkages and partly, also, through increasing the social depth of nationalist consciousness within society.

The truly formidable task of welding together different sections of society, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians, the rich and the poor, the upper and the middle classes, the subalterns and the deprived communities, into a cohesive polity was the achievement of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, who is remembered today as a Mahatma and the Father of the Nation. While fighting for the rights of his fellow citizens in South Africa, Gandhi devised a novel technique of political action, which he defined as the technique of Satyagraha, or struggle through truth. As defined by Gandhi, Satyagraha rested upon two basic principles: upon the pursuit of militant non-violence as the basis of political action; and, also, upon reaching out to the common folk through the idiom of bhakti, or devotional theism, which the great poet-saints of medieval India had devised to communicate a vision of the good life to the people. When Gandhi returned from South Africa to India in 1915, he not only reached out to the middle classes, but he also led local agitations among peasants and workers in different parts of the country with great success. This enabled him to gauge the intensity of nationalist sentiment among the subaltern classes, over and above the nationalism of the middle classes. After the termination of World War I, therefore, he turned his attention to the organization of countrywide campaigns which drew the middle and the popular classes into unified movements of protest against

British rule over India. In doing so, Gandhi held out to the people the objective of *swaraj*, or liberation — liberation from foreign rule; but liberation also from all that was unworthy within the Self — in the course of the struggle. Through holding out such an objective, Gandhi was able to generate mass movements of the most formidable demographic strength in the 1920s, the 1930s and the 1940s. These mass movements obliged the British to dispossess themselves of their empire over South Asia in August 1947.

NOT A CLEAN SLATE

In any critique of the great experiment in liberal democracy conducted within India after 1947, it is important to recall that the struggle for liberation within the country was among the most momentous mass movements in world history in the twentieth century. That this movement, which assumed its characteristic features due to the political genius of Gandhi, was less than fully successful is a fact which also needs to be underscored at this juncture. The vivisection of British India into two sovereign States in 1947, namely, India and Pakistan, was the single most important failure of the nationalist movement. Beyond this lay a certain amorphousness in ideological and organizational integration that raised problems difficult of resolution in the years which lay ahead. Notwithstanding these shortcomings, however, the liberation of India from alien domination in 1947 ranks among the three or four seminal events which transformed the world in the twentieth century.

When the leaders of India turned to the task of national reconstruction after 1947, their first and foremost challenge was to devise a constitution for the newly liberated country. In attempting such a task, they were not writing upon a clean slate: for the scale of popular involvement in the struggle for liberation made it clear that only a truly democratic arrangement, involving diverse sections of society, and fully sensitive to popular aspirations, could provide stable governance that would also bring about social and economic transformation in a desirable direction. Equally relevant was the fact that, prior to 1947, the British had initiated a series of constitutional reforms with limited democratic underpinnings in order to draw selected sections of Indian society into the business of governance. The constitution to be devised in a liberated India, therefore, could not altogether overlook the experiments in limited 'self-rule' which had been initiated earlier.

The constitutional initiatives taken by the British in India, prior to 1947, had some distinctive features which were an integral part of the balancing mechanisms of imperial control which they had devised within South Asia. To understand the imperial logic underpinning these initiatives, we need to say a word or two about two contrasting theories of representative democracy: about 'whig' institutions, which are constituted of like-minded social groups and economic interests in society, on the one hand; and about 'liberal' institutions, which are constructed around individual citizens and represent

territorial constituencies rather than organized groups and interests, on the other hand. The limited constitutional initiatives which the British had taken in India, first in 1909, then in 1919, and finally in 1935, were 'whig' rather than 'liberal' in design; and they were so constituted as to counterbalance one section of society against the other, in order to facilitate British domination over their empire in India. The character and objectives of British constitutional experimentation in India can best be illustrated by dwelling upon the last of the three constitutions, that of 1935, which the British had devised for India. This constitution attempted to create the illusion of autonomy in the provinces of the British empire over India. But it simultaneously instituted a system of federal governance in New Delhi, whereby the strength of nationalist India was counterpoised on the one hand by the dissenting stance of the minorities; and on the other by the autocratic majesty of princely India. Through a carefully contrived balancing of different constituencies within Indian society, the British thus hoped to draw South Asia, on a durable basis, into a relationship of political, economic and strategic subordination to Great Britain.

The Constitution of India, therefore, was framed in the late 1940s under a specific set of conditions: first, under the legacy of the constitutional experimentation of the colonial era; and secondly, in the wake of a mass-based struggle for liberation which had aroused great hopes and expectations among the common folk. Keeping in view the difficult situation in which they were located, the founding fathers of the Indian Constitution performed a difficult task with wisdom, courage and foresight. At the outset, they threw overboard the imperial design of a 'whig' constitution for a truly liberal and democratic structure. The most explicit and dramatic reflection of this change was embodied in the adoption of the principle of adult franchise as the basis of democratic governance in India. It is important to remember, at this juncture, that liberal theory does not necessarily advocate voting rights for every adult in a society characterized by poverty and illiteracy to the extent these social pathologies were present within India. Some members of the Constituent Assembly may have believed that this would result in a measure of social irresponsibility and ideological populism. Yet the principle of adult franchise was never questioned in the Constituent Assembly. Equally praiseworthy in its boldness was the decision to abolish the divisive notion of separate electorates for Muslim citizens at the same time that the right to religious freedom was firmly enshrined. No less courageous was the support extended in the Constitution to the principle of protective discrimination as the only fair basis of co-existence in a democratic society, where the gulf between the rich and the poor, the privileged and the underprivileged, was as wide as it was in India. In adopting the principle of protective discrimination, the framers of the Constitution held out special privileges for disadvantaged social groups, like untouchables and the tribal communities, in the hope that through such incentives these

communities would, in a decade or two, become a part of a plural national community, whose members enjoyed an equal measure of social standing and material dignity.

As we dwell upon the Constitution of India, fifty years after it was framed, the only area in which the wisdom of the founding fathers may be questioned is in the degree of centralization which they instituted into the formal and informal relationship between the Central Government in New Delhi on the one hand, and the States of the Indian Union on the other hand. In this regard, it is likely that the partition of British India into two sovereign States in 1947 played a decisive role in persuading the members of the Constituent Assembly to create a system of governance more centralized than was necessary, or sustainable in the long run for a country of India's physical dimensions and social diversity. Yet, as already suggested, we are reflecting upon a constitution drafted under the shadow of the vivisection of British India into two distinct countries, namely India and Pakistan.

THE NEW ELECTORAL POLITICS

The popular character of the struggle for liberation in India highlights the extent to which different classes and communities within the country, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians, the rich and the poor, participated in the countrywide agitations which were mounted against British imperialism in the second quarter of the twentieth century. It is important to keep in focus this cardinal phenomenon when we explore post-1947 developments within the country, whether they pertain to politics, or to the economy, or to the new cultural, intellectual and aesthetic movements within society.

Nevertheless, the transformation of a mass movement, prior to 1947, into a formally structured regime of liberal politics, democratic and secular in character, and concerned as much with an expansion in wealth generation as with equity in the distribution of wealth among different classes and communities, called for an entirely new set of initiatives and novel creative endeavour. The first and crucial step in this direction, as suggested above, lay in the creation of a prescriptive design for politics, as embodied in the Constitution of 1950, the distinctive characteristics of which have already been spelt out earlier. However, the transformation of a mass movement into a working system of governance, resting upon liberal political practice, was no easy task; and it was to this formidable challenge that Jawaharlal Nehru, leader of the national movement second only to Mahatma Gandhi, addressed himself after the Constitution of India had been adopted.

The first general election held under the new Constitution, in the winter of 1951-2, provides an insight into some of the challenges faced by Jawaharlal Nehru when he attempted to establish democratic institutions within India. The first point to be stressed, in this context, was the increase in the

sheer size of the electorate. In the elections held earlier in 1946, under the Constitution of 1935, the total size of the electorate was approximately forty million, because of the property or educational qualifications necessary for a citizen, before he/she acquired voting rights. As against this, the size of the electorate had expanded five-fold through the introduction of adult franchise in the new Constitution, giving a figure of 200 million voters in the 1951-2 contest. This was a stupendous expansion in the size of the voting community, an expansion which offered a formidable challenge to the Indian National Congress, the Socialist Party, the Communist Party, and the Hindu Mahasabha, the leading political organizations which were involved in the electoral fray.

As we turn to the general elections of 1951-2, the first contest fought on the basis of the new constitutional arrangements, we can predict with the benefit of hindsight that the Indian National Congress, the party which led India during the freedom struggle, was bound to be the natural choice of the people for the governance of the newly liberated country. However, a close look at the electoral scene reveals a highly fluid situation on the ground. In the first instance, the different parties involved in the contest were geared much more to involvement in agitations than they were geared to contesting electoral frays. Once again, such electoral experience as was available to different parties was relevant to small and limited electorates, because of the restricted franchise. The other factor which mattered, particularly in north India, was the dislocation and turbulence flowing from the partition of British India, which resulted in one of the biggest migrations known to human history. Indeed, millions of refugees traversed the international boundaries which demarcated India from Pakistan during the first decade after 1947.

When the nationalist leaders of India, within the Congress as well as in other parties of the left, the centre and the right, went into the electoral fray in the winter of 1951, they were to a large extent still fighting a rearguard action against the pathology of communalism and religious strife within society, which had resulted in the partition of British India in 1947. Nevertheless, developments within the Congress itself in the years after 1947 seemed to suggest that a dramatic reorientation of political loyalties was taking place in the country. Even a cursory look at the record of the Congress Party reveals that subsequent to Partition, the Muslim communities which remained in India reoriented their political stance, and adopted the position that the party of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru was the political formation most likely to provide them with security of life and property in the new republic which had formally come into existence in January 1950. Indeed, at the regional as well as at the local level, units of the erstwhile Muslim League formally joined the Congress; and carried with them their constituents into the party. It is likely that the Muslim vote was the largest bloc vote for the Congress in the election of 1951-2.

THREE POLITICAL IDIOMS AND THE FORCES AT WORK

If we dwell upon the ideological backdrop to the first two general elections, which played a crucial role in the crystallization of democratic institutions within the new republic, then we can discern three distinct idioms of politics which were utilized by the political leadership in their bid to win electoral support for themselves. Within the urban and cosmopolitan constituencies, the political leadership drew upon a liberal idiom in presenting policies and issues before the sophisticated audiences which they addressed. However, when these very leaders reached out to the rural world, they would speak in different voices: in some instances, they would give utterance to a 'saintly' idiom, drawing upon the rich religious heritage of popular culture legitimized by Mahatma Gandhi during the freedom struggle. More often, they drew upon the language of caste and community, touching upon the existential solidarities within rural society, and drawing in the process rich electoral benefits. These three idioms of politics were not necessarily mutually exclusive; and the language of popular address often contained judiciously mixed amalgams of the three idioms in order to secure optimum electoral success.

To the extent that politics is the art of the possible, the first general elections can be looked upon as a substantial success for democratic practice within India. The elections were largely peaceful; and the extent of electoral manipulation was modest; though in some constituencies locally dominant social groups probably exercised undue influence in shaping the electoral verdict, particularly so far as the untouchable communities were concerned. By and large, however, the results of the poll reflected the collective will of the people of India; though the rich, the powerful and the advantageously located had a very substantial role to play in deciding the character of the Lok Sabha and the style and content of governance which emerged through the unfolding of the electoral process.

The second and third general elections, both of which were held under conditions not substantially different from the first, brought comfortable majorities for the Congress, thereby sending out the signal that the formidable party which had waged the nationalist struggle, in the second quarter of the twentieth century, was also the natural party of governance in the decades after 1947. Reviewing this striking record of electoral primacy by a single political organization, an observer of the political scene spoke eloquently of a single party dominant system as an established norm within the Republic of India, a norm, moreover, which would ensure the strength and durability of liberal institutions within India.

The actual course of events, of course, was far more complex, and difficult to comprehend, than what the initial commentators had surmized. It is clear, from the empirical evidence available to us of the 1950s and 1960s, that winning parliamentary majorities in three successive elections had called for

nimble foot-work by the leadership of the Congress. Jawaharlal Nehru, for instance, had battled valiantly against communalism during the elections of 1951-2. The results of the election, however, demonstrated that the key problem lay elsewhere. The people of India, so the election results suggested, were not fighting the ghosts of the past; instead, they were looking keenly to an improvement in the material and cultural conditions of their life, as evidenced by the support they extended to the Socialist and the Marxist parties. The Socialist Party, for instance, had succeeded in securing 18 million votes to the 48 million votes of the Congress; though in the first-past-the-post system, this secured them only 24 seats as against the 364 seats secured by the Congress. Jawaharlal Nehru, who led the Congress in the first general election, took the support given to the Socialist Party as an indication of a desire for substantive social change by the people. He, therefore, immediately initiated action in two directions: first, he sought a formal alliance with the Socialist Party in order to strengthen his hands in favour of radical initiatives; and secondly, he took a series of steps introducing radical economic changes within India: through the planned industrialization of the country; and, also, through initiating reforms in the villages which ensured that rights in landed property were vested in the actual tiller of the soil. The 1950s, therefore, was a period of great social and economic transformation within India. But there were limits to what one could do in such a situation. At the height of his personal popularity, Nehru's attempts to establish rural co-operatives which diluted the property principle, were imperiously rejected by the Congress, **lock, stock and barrel.**

Beyond the adroit management of the apex electoral scene, however, there lay deeper forces within Indian society which need to be highlighted in a present context. What had actually transpired in the course of the electoral frays, in 1951-2 and subsequently, was that different classes and communities at the grass-roots level had drawn upon their traditional constituencies in extending support to particular parties and specific leaders. In so describing democratic contests in India, we are probably guilty of telescoping a complex process into a short and highly simplified procedure. That ties of caste and community not to mention religious solidarities are powerful factors in politics in India, is however a reality which no one would deny. Different parties for instance, choose candidates likely to benefit from the presence of specific caste groups in large numbers in specific constituencies. Indeed, this situation is so 'natural' that it took political commentators time to get abreast of what was actually happening in the political arena in the guise of popular democracy. The link between the institutions of popular representation, on the one hand, and the traditional solidarities on the ground as they related to different castes and communities, on the other, conferred a great strength on democratic institutions and ensured the firm establishment of representative politics within India. Yet the manner in which liberal democracy crystallized within India: that is, through drawing upon

traditional social hierarchy in the form of popular participation, introduced serious distortions in democratic functioning. As is well known, the social orders of traditional society were based on caste and privileged subordination and superordination to each other, to create an artificial hierarchy in society. These distortions were connected to the exclusions of popular representation in a supposedly democratic regime, which was strong and durable at the same time as it rested upon profound social inequality and intense economic exploitation.

A REGIME OF POLITICAL FLUIDITY

As we have suggested at the very commencement of this essay, the overflow of the nationalist consolidation which provided the basis for the organization of the electoral majorities of the Congress, in the first two decades and more after Independence, gave way to a new regime of political fluidity in the 1980s. This transition, when the dominance of the Congress yielded to the emergence of new political formations to the right and the left, was preceded by the turbulent 1970s which witnessed, for a span of two years, a breakdown in democratic governance within the country. We are, in some ways, still too close to the so-called Emergency to be able to give a full account of the factors which resulted in the temporary suspension of democracy between 1975 and 1977. At a formal level, it was triggered off by a militant satyagraha movement initiated by the Sarvodaya leader, Jayaprakash Narayan, against the democratically elected government in New Delhi under Indira Gandhi. Yet we can discern here profound transformations in society: social, political and economic; at the same time we can discern an altogether new level of consciousness among different social classes: among the minorities, the modestly located peasant communities, and the truly wretched of the (Indian) earth, that is the untouchables who were the landless agricultural labourers within rural society.

In our brief review of the political scene in India, we can do no more than give a sense of the changes, in material conditions of life, no less than in social awareness, which have contributed to a new fluidity in apex politics in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Let us look at the minorities, principally the Muslim communities, in the first instance. We have already suggested that with the partition of British India in 1947 the Muslims realigned themselves and gave unstinting support to the Congress in order to gain security of life and property for themselves. This support was a important factor behind the comfortable majorities which the Congress was able to win for itself in the first three general elections held after 1947. However, a new generation of Muslim citizens, who came of age in the 1970s, entertained an entirely different view of their rightful place in the Republic of India. This second generation of Muslims wanted for themselves a larger share of the wealth generated within the country. They also wanted openings

in the liberal professions, in commerce, and in entrepreneurship. Last but not the least, they desired for themselves a place of dignity in a plural India. To suggest that the Congress stood in the way of the realization of their aspirations by the Muslims would be patently wrong. However, in view of the relatively modest rate of growth in the economy and of the heightened aspirations of other classes and communities (as we shall see later), it was not very easy for the Congress to provide its Muslim supporters with what the latter regarded as their rightful share. If all this is taken in conjunction with some serious tactical mistakes committed by the Congress leadership in recent years, we get an insight into the reasons behind the alienation of the Muslims from the Congress.

Over and above the shifting stance of the Muslims, the fluidity of apex politics within India in the last two decades of the twentieth century — a fluidity which has led to precarious majorities or unstable coalitions in New Delhi — rests upon a complex range of factors. Besides the disillusionment of the Muslim communities, therefore, we have also to examine the changing social world of two important strata within rural society: of peasants with small or marginal holdings belonging to the category of the backward classes; and of the landless communities of India, the untouchables, described as Harijans, or children of God, by Mahatma Gandhi, who also identify themselves as Dalits, or the oppressed.

In the first instance, we shall dwell upon the so-called backward classes who consist of peasants with small or marginal holdings. There is substantial evidence to suggest that the regime of land reforms, instituted during the 1950s and the 1960s, conferred very substantial benefits upon the backward classes. Not surprisingly, the social mobility which the backward classes experienced in the third quarter of the twentieth century merely whetted their appetite for more, particularly in the states of North India. As was true for the Muslims, the backward classes, too, were initially supporters of the Congress during the first two decades after Independence, a period when the party enjoyed comfortable majorities in Parliament. But the growing ambition of the backward classes alienated them from the Congress, more particularly during the 1980s, when a demand for reservations in the civil service was raised by their leaders, to which demand the Congress showed a measure of indifference.

The changing temper of the Dalit communities of India in our times is perhaps the most explosive and the most heartening development in contemporary politics within the country. That these communities, who were drawn into a regime of protective discrimination by the Constitution, embarked upon a career of advancement after 1950, is understandable. Besides, there is concrete evidence to suggest that land reforms, too, conferred substantial benefits on them. Nevertheless, they still remain at the very bottom of the pyramid of society. A great Dalit leader, B.R. Ambedkar, who differed passionately from Gandhi, believed that the Dalits would find dignity for

themselves closely with the rural bourgeoisie of the Hindu social order. A third is Socialist and Leninist, on the other hand, with a partial to Ambedkar's statement of caste as a graded hierarchy. Hindu society has a revolutionary change along Gandhi's line in the status of the Harijans. More recently, the Dalit movement in Maharashtra and southern India has presented a challenge to an ideological position which is essentially Ambedkarite in its content and orientation.

When we dwell upon the condition of the Dalits in Indian society it is important to remember that the practice of adult franchise is in itself a transformative experience. We had suggested earlier that during the first two decades after Independence, the voting behaviour of the Dalit communities was substantially influenced by the pressure which locally dominant upper-caste social groups could exercise upon them. As we move towards the close of the twentieth century, there is increasing evidence to the effect that the Dalits were voting with increasing frequency, as free agents for candidates of their own choice. Perhaps their liberation from the control of the upper castes is one of the greatest triumphs of liberal democracy in India, though it is important to remember that this liberation has still to throw up a leadership with a strategic vision for its constituents.

No review of the social, cultural and political transformation which underpins democratic experimentation in India, over the past two decades, would be complete without dwelling upon the demographic expansion of the middle classes in India, in urban and in rural society, and the new cultural and religious values which are afloat in these classes as a result of this transformation. Here we can do no more than pay passing attention to this phenomenon. Contrary to liberal and radical theory, the modernization of Indian society has brought about a strengthening of religious values in the country, rather than the spread of secularism among the people, particularly the middle classes. These changes in social and moral mentalities, subtle yet concrete, crystallized in the last two decades in a very substantial increase in the strength of the Bharatiya Janata Party, an organization sympathetic to resurgent Hindu nationalism, which has become a substantial factor in national politics. We find a reflection of this fundamental change in the formation of a coalition government in New Delhi, during the fiftieth anniversary of Indian Independence with the Bharatiya Janata Party as a dominant member of the ruling coalition. That such a basic change should take place without intense political conflict may surprise some observers. Yet the strength of the democratic experiment in India lies in that such changes can be negotiated through the mechanisms of liberal democracy without any serious disruption in the business of governance and orderly political processes.

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Secularism: The Importance of Democracy

It was only recently proclaimed that the end of history had arrived with the victory of global capitalism over socialism. Yet within the short span of these last few years we have witnessed and are continuing to witness the most dramatic resurgence of ideologies and aspirations which have a distinctly nineteenth century feel to them. These have brought back history, if ever it had been ended, indeed with a disquieting resonance. I am not referring only to the ethnic confrontations in former Yugoslavia, but more widely to actions motivated by theories of racism and of ethnicity, and of the permeation of religion into politics. Such actions are more than visible in the heart of global capitalism as they also are in the societies of our continent.

The intellectually fashionable periodization today speaks of history in terms of the pre-colonial, the colonial and the post-colonial. The latter two are familiar and subject to much discourse. But pre-colonial history in India is largely unfamiliar to those who conduct this discourse. Nevertheless generalizations are made about the pre-modern tradition in India and these frequently derive from what is assumed to be the tradition, an assumption often based on the negation of that which is held to be characteristic of modernity. There is little hesitation in using colonial constructions of 'tradition' or 'community' or 'culture' in speaking of an earlier historical heritage. A familiarity with the various pre-colonial associations of these concepts is regarded as unnecessary. If, as some historians assert, cultural concepts are to be given priority in historical explanation, then surely these concepts have to be viewed from a historical perspective. It seems to me that this is all the more necessary in a society which even today carries so many 'cultural survivals' from earlier times. Part of the reason for this unconcern with earlier history is the theory, disturbing for the historian, that all historical moments are isolated, fortuitous and contingent. The logic of this would justify even the rejection of history, and if the historical moment belongs to a post-colonial situation, its antecedents or mutations from a pre-colonial or a colonial time would be regarded as irrelevant. From a historian's perspective, this is unacceptable.

We are being encouraged today to take a fragmented view of ourselves and of our past, where the fragmentation follows from the premises of nineteenth-century interpretations of our past, and which had hopefully been replaced by a holistic view when we terminated colonial rule. In speaking of a holistic view I am not endorsing the claim of ruling groups to represent

the whole, but it is wrong to think the citizenship is a mere technical matter, which is most of all a matter for political and moral education of the citizen. The national feeling is essential but it must be based on the reality of the state, not being a sign of blind conformity to the kind of community which we feel behind and have built to us in the name of Independence. And it is this existence and regard to the community which would give all those in position of the nation state and upon this sense the nation state depends as well then, but how this is to happen and what will replace the nation state are not clear. For the moment, the need at least is to build and improve it in more realistic terms as to ensure it will be a fruitful state to which we must all contribute for the common good.

CENTRALITY OF SECULARISM

The return to a holistic view requires a reassessment of the relation of civil society to the nation-state. In this the secularizing of our society as part of the process of change envisioned in modernization becomes a central theme. I would like to argue, but this is not a matter related only to religious identities and religious nationalism, but has implications for the totality of social change. Further, that although it differs from our pre-colonial past, such a secularizing is not an attempt at alienating ourselves from our tradition, since the pre-colonial past has, in ample measure, ideas and institutions conducive to the secular.

Secularism in Europe has its own history. Its association with the separation of religion from civic life is only of recent times, accompanying the advent of the nation-state and the historical process of modernization. The meaning of the word has changed in European intellectual history and therefore its exact translation cannot be sought in non-European languages, but as a concept it can be located in cultures where this historical process is taking place. For the Romans 'secular' meant a specific period of time, generally a hundred years, marked by holding games and worshipping the gods. Because of its association with a long temporal duration it came to be used gradually as a description of the world which had existed for a long period. This was later contrasted with the Church which had a briefer life. Secular was initially taken in this sense as that which pertained to the world and not to the Church.

To speak of secularism as a western concept superimposed on India is historically incorrect, for it is not confined to the question of the relation between religion and the state derived from the experience of the Christian Church. Within the Christian Church there was a substantial difference between the Protestant induction of some aspects of secularism and the Catholic confrontation with it. The Lutheran Scandinavian countries had few problems with secularizing their societies, the Catholic priests of Italy and Spain, not to mention Latin America, are still battling with it. The crux

of the confrontation is not around the religion of the individual or its negation but over the question of the authority of religious institutions, or institutions inspired by religious identities, over civic life.

By the mid-nineteenth century the definition of secular focussed on the question of ethics. It was stated that social morality, central to the secular, should have as its sole basis the well-being of mankind to the exclusion of considerations stemming from a belief in God or in a future condition. The key elements of this morality were legal order, political freedom, individual autonomy and material well-being. These are elements endorsed even by those who find modernization antipathetic. The emphasis therefore is not on a hostility to religion but on rational and moral principles governing society, principles which oppose the alienation of human beings or the absence of social ethics. Yet there is a persistence in arguing that the secular hinges solely on the conflict between Church and State. In the definition of secularism, the state is not the arbiter of conflict or co-existence between religions, nor is secularism the ideology of statehood. If we have conceded this to the state, then this will need to be corrected by the state having to adhere to the values and ethics of a secularized society.

Where secularism is so interpreted, the evidence from pre-colonial India points to a relationship far more nuanced than it was in Europe and, in some ways, dissimilar. This is in part due to the multiplicity of religions from early times and in part to the nature of Indian social organization which was entirely different from Europe. There were certainly rituals to consecrate a raja and these were moments of intense religiosity. A new sultan was announced by having the *khutba* read in his name in the mosque. Interestingly, however, state patronage was bestowed in substantial amounts to a range of what may otherwise have been conflicting religious sects and institutions. The Mauryan emperor Ashoka encouraged respect for both the *brahmana* and the *shramana* although elsewhere the relation between the two is compared to that between the mongoose and the snake. There is an on-going controversy as to whether Harshavardhana of Kannauj was a Buddhist or a Shaiva, given his endowments and support to both, and this was soon after the time when the Shaiva sects of Kashmir had destroyed Buddhist monasteries and killed Buddhist monks. The Chaulukyas of Gujarat built a mosque for the Arabs trading in western India, which mosque was destroyed by the Paramaras of Malwa campaigning against the Chaulukyas. Mughal endowments to *brahmanas*, *jogis*, and temples are recorded, even those of Aurangzeb.

KINGS AND CULTURAL PLURALISM

Cultural pluralism and its protection was accepted as the duty of the king. His protection of *dharma* was not religion in the modern sense for it enveloped the entire range of social obligations of which religious ritual was

a part. This however is not what is meant by a secular society. Secularism is not expressed merely by the state protecting and ensuring the co-existence of religions. But, where there is evidence for this from the past, it increases the potential for locating those historical activities which would be conducive to the encouragement of the secular today.

The notion of a state religion in pre-colonial India also becomes somewhat meaningless when it is apparent that political power was relatively open throughout Indian history. Ruling families frequently came from groups ranked as socially low or from obscure families, where some made an effort to cover this up with fancy origin myths and claims to *kshatriya* status. But in the process of becoming politically established they tended to carry their religious cults with them and these had then to be recognized as part of the established religion. The entry of Shaktism into upper-caste practice was in part due to this process. Where such kings could eventually claim to be the *avatara* of Vishnu, the centrality of a god as a focus of power begins to pale.

Alternatively, an existing state sometimes had to extend its patronage not only to the established religious institutions, but even to a cult of the marginalized groups in order to strengthen its authority. Although such cults are sometimes brought on par with upper-caste religion, their local roots and specific meaning remain, and distinguish them from other such cults. Thus the worship of the hero-stone among pastoralists in Maharashtra was mutated into the cult of Vithoba, the Yadava dynasty encouraging its identity with Vishnu. This resulted in Yadava control over large tracts of the less fertile parts of Maharashtra. The same process has been sketched for many other areas, especially at the turn of the first millennium AD.

If one takes a long view of the past, human societies have moved from the paleolithic to the neolithic to the chalcolithic to urban civilizations and much more. Each change brought its own anxieties and bewilderments where power and authority were conceded by some and contested by others. As far back as 500 BC, emerging kingdoms in the Ganga plain began to supersede the clans and the beginnings of urbanization brought further change. There was at this time a strong endorsement of social ethics. Buddhist thought maintained that ethical behaviour was socially determined and did not derive from a deity, a clear separation of ethics from religion. The centrality of social ethics is a significant part of our inheritance.

The history of religion in India has generally been viewed from the perspective of both the Hindu and the Muslim upper castes. Such religion was directed to a specific deity or deities and had institutions for channelling worship. Sacred space was demarcated by the temple and the mosque. Sometimes this was extended to the *matha* and the *khanqah*. Temples and *mathas* were closed to some lower castes and to untouchables, mosques and *khanqahs* were open, but nevertheless the clientele was discrete. There were orders of priests and monks, there were *ulema*, there were texts held sacred, and there was a competition for wealthy patrons, particularly royalty. These

were all absorbed into the fold of Hinduism. But in England, at the time of the independence movement, the support for Hinduism was coming from India itself, and was genuine but did not prevent the existence of a growing religious freedom for all religions proper. The lower castes would accept the religion of the people, would have performed the requisite services but would not accept the caste system included among the worshipers. Thus, following the British model, the new constitution was founded by a coalition of Hindus and Muslims, whom we now identify with Hindu and Muslims, formed the majority of the population, their religion has to be recognized as distinctive.

The religion of this majority was a mixing and merying of belief and ritual drawn from a variety of religious experiences in which the formal differentiations of upper caste religions did not generally prevail. Frequently the religious practices of these groups were unacceptable to those who defined Jain and Hinduism. Thus *brahmanas* shrink from libations of alcohol and offering of fish and mullahs could not prevent converts to Islam continuing to worship deities. The recognition of these religions as central to the assessment of religion in India is a recent interest, having been substantially ignored in the Orientalist construction of Indian religion.

The claim that there was religious tolerance in Indian society is defended by recourse to texts. In fact it was the juxtaposition of various kinds of religious practices and beliefs tied closely to social organization which was the basis of both relative religious tolerance and intolerance based on social outcasting. Religious practices and beliefs could overlap among adjoining castes, but social distinctions were firmly demarcated. Religious tolerance was possible because of the enforcement of social boundaries, but when these were transgressed or seen as competitive, as for example, between the Shaivas and the Lunas in Karnataka, the tolerance disappeared and the conflict took a religious form. Violent forms of religious intolerance were local and did not develop into *rebellions* and crusades. The co-existence of religions is again described as secularism but this is not a sufficient description of secularism.

The religious reality in the past for the majority of Indians has been the recognition of a multiplicity of religions drawing marginally perhaps from the established ones, but far more rooted in local cults, beliefs and rituals and identified less by religion and more by *jati* or by *zat*. This gave them a certain freedom to worship a stone, an icon or a deity with which they alone had a dialogue. These were groups entwined by social regulations but of a local kind. They maintained a distance from the *brahmanas* and the *ulema* for they were essentially unconcerned with norms of the *sutras* or with *fatwas*, governed as they were by their own customary observances. This distance was not an idyllic or archaic freedom but resulted from the segmentation of *jati* which kept them apart. The distancing in religious belief and practice, however, did not prevent an oppressive proximity in areas of civic concern, in the control exercised by those in authority over

such attempts. At the same time there was a degree of spontaneity. As the practice of democracy the ranking was held together by the existence of those at the top and the recognition of them as the basis of it. More than that, most workers could find in it a sense that there was a certain commonness and some incompleteness. With the passage of time, the democratic aspect should ideally take over from the workers' hegemony and speak about the force of historical conditioning.

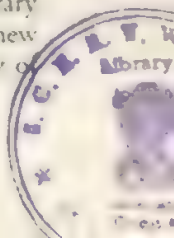
Caste as past conditioned present, shaping present, the present and action to transform and create and build. Further, political society was the central pillar and those who were outside it were periphery. There was therefore an enormous diversity even in the way of life and to be uniform such as Islam and Christianity. Worship in temples and mosques was formal but the perfect worshipper was the *brahmin* who, though, given duty, his given in form of worship. Religion itself was bound by individual inclination but religion as practice and ritual is that of the past. The pressures to conform were products of society and did not emanate from a God.

As in most pre-colonial societies, families bound the segments into a whole but it was not an immutable hierarchy. Osmosis between close castes did permit some mobility although this was dependent on the historical situation. Recruitment to upper castes in the case of *brahmins* and *kshatriyas* took the form of incorporating new groups and assigning status. Inscriptions of the post-Gupta period from Bangladesh mention an increase of *brahmin* *gotras* which have been explained as resulting from the incorporation of people from local societies who were then given *brahmin* status. This becomes a feature in many areas where there was an expansion of the agrarian economy and state power. In the case of Ashrams and Saivads who claimed higher status because of foreign origins, and frequently had high administrative positions, their ranks could also increase when after a few generations indigenous converts made the same claims. A change of status required a change in the way of life. Therefore only those who could invest in this change were able to make it. Others sought to alter the ranking or express their dissent by initiating a new religious sect which, in negotiating with other social groups, either negated or ignored caste ranking, but more often than not was transmuted into a caste. Both these features make a consistent pattern throughout the Indian past.

This does not make Indians more embedded in religion. But it requires that we investigate the relation between religion, politics and society in the pre-colonial period in terms different from the established ones. Monolithic, homogeneous, religious communities claiming to represent either the majority or the minority provide little explanation of the antecedents to the present functioning of Indian society. They only foster the aspirations of some present-day political parties. But at the same time, the contemporary ideology of religious majoritarianism not only moulds religion into a new homogeneous and militant form to enable it to function as an agency of

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political mobilization, but it also makes a mockery of democracy by giving to the majority a predetermined identity. The fears of those labelled as minorities are also sought to be allayed by encouraging them to resort to uniformity and militancy.

This is not to suggest that there was an absence of communities in the past, but that community identities were many and drew on caste, location, language, religious practice and belief, some of which intersected. These were not communities identified across the subcontinent by a single, recognized, religious mould. Communities are in any case constructed, which is why there can be intersecting identities and these identities can disappear over time or survive in variant forms. The current recognition of monolithic religious communities is also a construction which grows out of the way Indian society was perceived in the colonial period. Social memory is also influenced by historical perceptions.

THE DEMOCRATIC DIMENSION

The introduction of the secular into a society cannot be a partial experience, revolving around religion. It is a component of a bigger change involving primarily the introduction of democracy, but also of new technologies, and the emergence of a new social group, the middle-class, which breaks away from earlier social identities. There is inevitably a search for new identities and in the Indian situation of recent times encouragement has been given to religious identities on the basis of a particular interpretation of what is regarded as the Indian tradition and Indian history. Secularism is no more a western concept than is the middle-class or the nation-state, even if all these are changes introduced to the world as a result of capitalism or colonialism.

The recognition of the secular relates to specific historical changes experienced by a variety of societies and may well in the next century result in varied manifestations. In Europe this change was associated with societies which had been confined to a single religion which evolved as a focus of power and therefore came into confrontation with the state. In India there has been a multiplicity of religions and the state did not need to confront these. This pre-colonial experience should make it easier for us to secularize our society provided we can cut our way through the impositions of the last two centuries. Religion in India, even if viewed in terms of Hindu and Muslim, has had a strong personal component and has not been dependent on a Church. It would therefore be regarded as natural that religion be a personal matter, a matter of faith, and neither the concern of the state nor of the self-appointed theologians of any majority or minority community. To draw on a secular tradition from the Indian past would have less to do with religious identities and more to do with the questioning of social boundaries.

The problems of monolithic religious communities, created and endorsed by colonial and, to some degree, nationalist opinion, remain with us. If the

nation-state has accepted these identities, then the failure lies with civil society acquiescing in this acceptance. We are hesitant to recognize the elements of a different tradition which I would argue is the historical heritage and which, although not secularism, would nevertheless legitimize a secular social ethic. This in turn would empower civil society to strengthen democracy and prevent authoritarianism by the state. Secularization creates new categories of cohesive social relationships which can monitor the activities of the state. The monitoring is not necessarily a self-conscious act for it is written into the legislating of human rights. These are opposed to any identity used for constructing monolithic, homogeneous, religious communities, or for that matter even communities identified by race and ethnicity. Such identities are only too present in various parts of the world and are by no means absent in the subcontinent, where they have become the major source of opposition to the rights necessary for an enlightened society.

The secularization of society is neither an easy nor a rapid change. The requirements of social justice and of social welfare, with precedence for subordinated groups and gender justice, have not been given priority in Indian development and are likely to be brushed aside by the demand of global capitalism. To try and hold back modernization is now a fantasy. But we cannot be passive recipients of modernization. In the absence of the practice of human rights and social justice, a modernized state can become merely another oppressive state: and where it appropriates the kind of nationalism which creates ghettos, it becomes a fascist state. Ideologies of social welfare and social justice can be effectively put into practice by the state, but their continued existence, if not enhancement, should become the essential concern of civil society. This implies not just an expectation from the state, but more importantly the ensuring of their presence in our institutions. It is only through empowering that which is secular in our society that we can hope to live with dignity.

B. R. NANDA

Gandhi and Nehru: An Intertwined Legacy

Millions of words have been written by and on both Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Their lives and work are inextricably intertwined with more than half a century of Indian history. In this article, I propose to do no more than touch on a few basic questions. What did Gandhi and Nehru stand for? Do their objectives and methods have any relevance as we struggle with our problems today? To say that the relationship between Gandhi and Nehru was that of a master and a disciple would not be correct. Nehru was not a blind follower. Nor did Gandhi expect unquestioning obedience from him or, for that matter, from anyone else. They were divided not only by twenty years in age, but by deep intellectual and temperamental differences. That Nehru, with his enthusiasm for humanism, science and technology, should have taken to a Mahatma with his spinning wheel, prayers and inner voice was an enigma to contemporary critical observers. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the partnership between these two men of exceptional energy and integrity lasted for more than twenty-five years; it survived numerous strains and stresses to which it was subjected by the vicissitudes of politics and life. The secret hope cherished by high British officials (and even by some of the Indian radicals) that Jawaharlal would break with the Mahatma and form a separate party remained unrealized. Deep down, both of these leaders knew that, despite occasional differences on tactics and methods, they had the same unalterable aim, namely the freedom of India. Neither of them was prepared to press differences of opinion to breaking point. Gandhi often went more than halfway to meet Nehru's views, and the latter in the last resort was not averse to a compromise to save a split in the party. In 1928, at the Calcutta session of the Indian National Congress, when there was a clash between the old guard and the younger generation of Congress leaders on the issue of dominion status versus independence, a young Nehru accepted the compromise formula produced by Gandhi.

There were numerous other occasions when Nehru was assailed by doubts on Gandhi's policies; in 1929, on the Dominion Status declaration of Lord Irwin; in 1930, on the Gandhi-Irwin pact; in 1932, on Gandhi's fast against separate electorates for the untouchables; in 1934, on the withdrawal of the civil disobedience movement; in 1937, on the formation of Congress ministries in the provinces; in 1942, on the Quit India movement; and finally, in 1947, on the partition of the country. Contrary to a

widespread impression, it was not always Nehru who gave in. In 1942, in the weeks preceding the adoption of the 'Quit India' resolution by the All India Congress Committee, Nehru was able to effect a major shift in Gandhi's attitude to the retention of Allied troops on Indian soil. In 1947, Gandhi, against his own better judgement, let Nehru and the majority in the Congress Working Committee have their way on the division of India, as embodied in the Mountbatten plan. It was a deliberate gesture of self-abnegation to keep the party and the country united at a critical time.

In later years, with the advantage of hindsight, Nehru came to realize that the Mahatma's political instinct had often been sounder than the arguments with which he clothed his decisions. It is instructive to compare the *Discovery of India* written in 1944, with the *Autobiography*, written ten years earlier; in the intervening decade, Nehru's criticism of Gandhi's policies had become visibly muted. As Nehru himself bore the burden of leading the party and the government after 1947, he was better able to appreciate the dilemma of the Mahatma in the pre-independence days. 'A political leader', Nehru told Norman Cousins, the editor of *Saturday Review*, 'cannot function like a prophet. He has to limit himself to the people's understanding of him.' Part of the difficulty arose from Gandhi's peculiar idiom, which was aimed at the masses and grated on the ears of the western-educated elite. Nor was it always easy to immediately grasp the full, long-term implications of Gandhi's strategy. For instance, Nehru once asked Gandhi why he had chosen to campaign against untouchability rather than make a frontal assault on the caste system. 'If untouchability goes', Gandhi replied, 'the caste system goes.' Gandhi thus deliberately attacked the caste system at the point where it was most vulnerable. 'A tremendous revolutionary force in the right direction', this was how Nehru described Gandhi to Tibor Mende, the (Hungarian-born) French journalist, in 1955.

THE BOND: THE CAUSE OF INDIA'S FREEDOM

It was the cause of Indian freedom which brought Gandhi and Nehru together, and which kept them together. The national awakening long ante-dated the advent of Gandhi on the Indian political stage. It had found expression in the brilliant advocacy of Dadabhai Naoroji and Mahadev Govind Ranade, the pointed thrusts at British imperialism by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, the passionate prose of Aurobindo Ghose and the stately eloquence of Gopal Krishna Gokhale. But from 1920 onwards, with the coming of Gandhi, there was a quantitative as well as qualitative change. Politics ceased to be largely an urban or middle-class phenomenon, a diversion for the weekend, or for the Christmas week. Gandhi toured the country from one end to the other — by train, by car, by boat, by bullock-cart, and even on foot. He went far into the interior in villages which had been off the beaten track of political leaders. He came to epitomize the spirit of nationalism. He felt at home in every part of India

and in every segment of Indian society. A Gujarati by birth, he had fought for Sindhi and Bohra merchants and for Tamilian plantation workers in South Africa. His first major agrarian agitation after his return to India was in Bihar. It was the tragedy of the Punjab in the spring of 1919 which hastened his transition to a rebel against the British Raj. There was hardly a province of India to whose succour he did not go on one occasion or the other: the earthquake-hit Bihar, the flood-stricken Orissa, the riot-torn Bengal, the Harijans of Kerala — all stirred him to his depths. His patriotism had no room for racial or communal exclusiveness. He equally respected all religions and all cultures, and was singularly free from the not uncommon arrogance of the highly educated Indian towards his less fortunate brethren. Of the religion of the tribals of Assam, Gandhi once said, 'What have I to take to them except to go in my nakedness to them? Rather than ask them to join my prayers, I would join their prayers.'

Gandhi's deep feeling for the rich cultural diversity of India and for her unity was shared by Nehru and indeed found in him a superb spokesman. 'We must try to understand', he said, 'what India is and how this nation has developed a composite personality, with its many facets and yet with an enduring unity.' Nehru's writings on this theme were like heady wine to India's youth in the 1930s and 1940s. His use of the modern idiom, as distinct from the homely and somewhat mystical phrases of the Mahatma, made him more easily intelligible to the outside world. It was the publication in England of Nehru's autobiography in 1936 which for the first time presented Gandhi's principles and politics in terms which the West could begin to understand. Gandhi had made Indian freedom a moral issue; Nehru made it a world issue. Nehru's ringing phrases echoed in several countries of Asia and Africa; even in Europe, they undermined imperialist complacency by sowing the seeds of doubt in liberal and socialist circles.

India's foreign policy, of which Nehru was the chief architect, fulfilled one of Gandhi's cherished aspirations; that Indian freedom should be a prelude to the freedom of all Asia and Africa. It was but fitting that Gandhi should have been present at the first Asian Relations Conference at New Delhi in March 1947. During the following decade India's moral weight was strongly exerted in favour of the liquidation of colonialism in Indonesia, Indo-China and in several other countries. Nehru held up before the newly liberated countries the policy of 'non-alignment', which contributed to the lessening of the arena of international tension at a time when the two super powers had not learnt to talk to each other. His crusade at international fora against racial discrimination and for bridging the economic gap between the developed and underdeveloped countries stemmed from deep conviction. Gandhi's incessant emphasis on the power of the human spirit and on the two-edged nature of violence as an instrument of political and social change had conditioned Nehru against colonialism, racialism and militarism. 'The policy of non-alignment pursued by India', he told a Columbia University audience in 1953, 'is a

positive and vital policy that flows from our principle for freedom and from the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. He did not deviate from this policy despite difficulties and setbacks, and was able to create what may be called a national consensus on foreign policy, in which the protection of national self-interest is allied to a strong desire for peace. This was confirmed in a remarkable manner in December 1971, when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, in the very hour of the Indian victory, declared a unilateral ceasefire. There was not a single dissenting voice.

GANDHI'S VISION

Gandhi's vision of free India was part of a larger vision in which he saw the end of the exploitation of the poor by the rich, of the masses by the classes, of the village by the towns, of the weaker or so called underdeveloped races by the stronger or more advanced ones. Nehru cherished the same vision. It was common ground between them that political freedom was only a means to an end: the provision of a better life for India's population. They did not, however, quite agree on how to achieve it. While Nehru pinned his faith on science, modern technology and industrialization, Gandhi talked of 'village swaraj' in which each village was to be largely self-sufficient for its vital requirements, growing its own food, and its own cotton for its cloth, and (if surplus land was available) cash crops. Every village was to have its own school, theatre and public hall. Education was to be compulsory, there was to be no untouchability and as far as possible every activity was to be conducted on a co-operative basis.

Contrary to a common impression, Gandhi did not idealize poverty for its own sake. Indeed, he considered grinding poverty, such as prevailed in India, as degrading and dehumanizing. He wanted a substantial rise in the standard of living of the masses. At the same time, he abhorred the quest for an unending multiplication of wants, which, in his view, was bound to lead to commercial and colonial exploitation and to wars. He had a deep distrust both of industrialism and of the modern state. 'Pandit Nehru wants industrialization', he wrote, 'because he thinks that if it is socialized, it would be free from the evils of capitalism. My own view is that the evils are inherent in industrialization, and no amount of socialization can eradicate them.'

Gandhi's views on industrialization did not commend themselves to the Indian intelligentsia, and even to many of his colleagues in the Congress leadership. To many of his eminent contemporaries — scientists, economists, industrialists, radicals, socialists, communists — Gandhian economics seemed a throwback to primitiveness, to an utopian pre-industrial position which was untenable in the modern world. The arguments for and against industrialization figured in discussions and correspondence between Gandhi and Nehru. Nehru's *Autobiography* fairly stated their respective positions. The intellectual gulf on this issue was sometimes narrowed but rarely bridged. The Mahatma's

ideas seemed to Nehru too empirical, too amorphous and simplistic. 'The process of history and economics', Nehru wrote, 'cannot be stopped for long.' Nehru was convinced that India had no alternative but to tread the path to progress, which Europe, America and Japan had traversed. Indeed, to make up for two centuries of arrested economic development, India had to accelerate its march on that path. In June 1939, as Chairman of the Indian National Planning Committee of the Indian National Congress, Nehru wrote a comprehensive note in which he defined democratic planning as 'technical coordination by disinterested experts, of consumption, production, investment, trade and income distribution in accordance with the social objectives set by bodies representative of the majority.' The fundamental aim, he wrote, was to ensure an adequate standard of living for the Indian masses, which required an increase of national wealth five or six times. A minimum standard for everyone required not only increase in production but a more equitable distribution. He suggested targets to raise nourishment to 2800 calories, clothing to at least 30 yards, and housing standards to at least 100 square feet per head, and a health centre per thousand of the population. Agricultural production had to be increased, a 'balanced structure' of heavy, medium and cottage industries established, unemployment diminished and illiteracy liquidated. All this was to be part of a national plan.

Believing that industrialization on a large scale was the answer to India's development problem, Nehru was not attracted by what he considered the Mahatma's rural utopia. 'I do not understand', he wrote to Gandhi in 1945, 'why a village should necessarily embody truth and non-violence. A village, normally speaking, is backward intellectually and culturally, and no progress can be made from a backward environment.'

In an essay on 'Gandhian Economic Thought', written more than thirty years ago, J.J. Anjaria had attempted a critique of the Gandhian model of rural development and indicated the several question-marks which remained. Was it possible to ensure substantial self-sufficiency on the part of each village and, if so, at what cost? Was khadi not dependent for its survival on the patronage of the cities rather than that of the villages? How was a village or even a group of villages to be insulated from the rest of the world for consumption and capital goods? How were problems of costing, pricing, currency, and external trade to be solved? Decentralization of economic and political power was an admirable principle, but if it was conceded (as Gandhi had done) that some basic industries were necessary, and would have to be run by the State, the nationalized sector under the Gandhian scheme might not be as insignificant as had been assumed.

DIVERGENT ECONOMIC VISIONS

Gandhi was assassinated six months after India became independent and did not have the time to perfect his economic model, or to try it out in the

post-colonial period on any sizeable scale. Nevertheless, Gandhi's model, as expounded in his writings, contains valuable insights which remain valid today. He recognized certain unique features of the Indian situation. One of these is the predominance of the self-employed producer, agriculturist or artisan engaged in producing for his basic requirements and not for the pursuit of wealth for its own sake. The mass of small producers in India is thus a social category fundamentally different from either medieval serfs or the modern proletariat, which formed the basic argument for the model of a classless society. Nor does the small self-employed producer, working and living within the constraints of community life, fit into the individual-based capitalist model loved by the liberal-rationalist school. Both these schools of thought have tended to identify economic development with the disintegration of the small peasant and artisan economy and the growth of large-scale enterprises based on modern technology. Gandhi saw the difficulties and dangers of indiscriminate industrialization in underdeveloped countries if millions of small producers forming the bulk of society were alienated from the means of production.

Few people would disagree today that after the attainment of independence India could no more have opted out of industrialization than she could have effected unilateral disarmament. 'We cannot stop the river of change', Nehru had written in his *Autobiography*, 'or cut ourselves adrift from it, and psychologically, we, who have eaten the apple of Eden cannot forget the taste and go back to primitiveness.' India has charted her course on Nehru's model of harnessing science and technology for planned economic development. There have been significant gains all along the economic front during these fifty years, but the progress has not been as smooth or as rapid or as evenly spread as was desired or planned.

The problems which have arisen in recent years were not absent from Nehru's mind. He was not daunted by the prospect of setbacks. 'Only the dead have no problems', he once said, 'the living have problems and they grow by fighting with them. It is a sign of the growth of this nation that not only do we solve problems, but create new problems to solve.'

As indicated earlier in this article, while the strategy of the struggle against British imperialism had been largely that of Gandhi, Nehru, through his radical views, had helped to stiffen it. It seems in the post-independence period, the process might be reversed; into the framework of the economic progress originally set up by Nehru and adopted by the country since 1947, some Gandhian insights could be usefully incorporated. For one thing, the focus, as the Mahatma had always said, could be more and more on the village. There could be greater emphasis on voluntary work, less dependence on the machinery of the state, and more on co-operative effort generated by the people themselves. Greater austerity all round, a reorientation of higher education and research supporting the needs of the village — all these stand out in the Gandhian model. Gandhi gave a great deal of thought to the problems

of the village, especially after he had settled at Sevagram in Central India. 'How to turn waste into wealth', was his summing up to Lord Farringden of the work of the All-India Village Industries Association. Of the 400 adults of Sevagram the Mahatma said that 'they could put ten thousand rupees into their pockets if only they would work as I ask them. But they won't. They lack cooperation; they do not know the art of intelligent labour. They refuse to learn anything new.' Among the things which the villagers could do, but failed to do, was to keep their village clean. Gandhi attributed it to the fear of most Indians of touching their own dirt and, therefore, of cleaning it. He exhorted everyone to be his own scavenger, to join in a campaign to keep village tanks and wells and streets clean, and to remove the cause for Lionel Curtis' reproach that Indian villages were dung-heaps.

Nutrition was another problem to which he gave much thought. He realized with something of a shock that, apart from their poverty, the food habits of people in the villages were responsible for their undernourishment. The deficiency in vitamins was inexcusable when green leaves were available for the picking. Gandhi appealed to Indian scientists to pursue research into Indian diets in the context of Indian conditions:

It is for you to make these experiments. Don't say off-hand that Bengalis need half a pound of rice every day and must digest half a pound. Devise a scientifically perfect diet for them. Determine the quality of starch required for an average human constitution. I would not be satisfied until I have been able to add some milk and milk fat and greens to the diet of our common village folk. I want chemists who would starve in order to find an ideal diet for their poor countrymen. Unfortunately, our doctors have never approached the question from the humanitarian standpoint, at any rate from the poor man's standpoint.

As a 'practised cook', he wrote on modes of cooking which did not destroy the nutritive value of foods. He stressed the superiority of hand-ground wheat and hand-polished rice to factory products. 'The textile mills', he wrote, 'had brought unemployment in their wake, but rice and flour mills have also brought in undernourishment and disease.'

Gandhi believed that the 'revivification of India's villages is a necessity of our existence. We must mentally go back to the villages and treat them as our pattern, instead of putting the city life before them for imitation.' The cities, he said, were capable of taking care of themselves. 'It is the villagers we have to turn to. We have to disabuse them of their prejudices, their superstitions, their narrow outlook, and we can do so in no other manner than that of staying amongst them and sharing their joys and sorrows and spreading education and intelligent information among them.'

Gandhi was all for the gospel of work. To a 'people famishing and idle', he said, 'the only acceptable form in which God can dare appear is work and promise of food as wages.' If he had the good fortune, he said, to come face

to face with one like the Buddha, he should not hesitate to ask him why he did not teach the gospel of work in preference to one of contemplation. In one of the meetings of the All India Village Industries Association, Gandhi spoke on socialism for the poor and life in an ideal village. He suggested that those who could not afford milk could get along with separated milk without fat, which retained considerable nutritive value. Those who could not afford fruit could make do with tamarind, sour lime and tomatoes as fruit. He dwelt on model houses built of thatch, mud and palm-leaf matting. He wondered whether the number of cattle in villages could be reduced. Why was it necessary, he asked, for every household in a village to keep a bullock-cart? Could not the villagers under a co-operative scheme do with fewer carts? Why could they not run a co-operative animal-shed? Why could not they have a marketing co-operative for the sale of grain and crops? was it not possible for all the village land to be cultivated on a co-operative basis and the produce distributed among those who had worked to produce it? Was it not possible to devise inexpensive warm clothing for villagers so that they did not have to huddle together — for warmth — along with their family and animals in the same room?

Living in a village, constantly thinking about the problems of the village, Gandhi was seeking solutions to these problems within the human and material resources of the village. This is an approach which could be profitably pursued even today. The 'gobar gas plant' of which we have heard so much is an example of this approach; if Gandhi had been alive, he would have been one of its most enthusiastic supporters. As against this, he would have found it difficult to endorse the orientation of a system of higher education of whose products a sizable number are tempted to go abroad to man the public health system of Great Britain and the high-technology industry of the United States and Canada, rather than find gainful employment in rural India which needs them most.

AREAS OF AGREEMENT

It is a curious fact that in the debate on the legacy of Gandhi and Nehru in the post-1947 period, the focus has been mainly on their differing approaches to economic problems. They were, however, in agreement over a whole range of other basic issues, the freedom and unity of India, a pluralist polity, and peaceful methods for resolving differences between groups, communities and nations. Both denounced religious and linguistic fanaticism, caste exclusiveness and untouchability; they would have been horrified by the eruptions of casteism, corruption and criminalization in Indian politics which we see today. Both of them regarded politics as one of the avenues of service to society, and not as a means of acquiring personal gain and the pursuit of power. Both of them eschewed populist rhetoric. They did not pander to the masses; their speeches and writings were a healthy mixture of exhortation

and the young Gandhi had already insisted that swaraj meant not only the end of the British rule but the emancipation by the Indian people of India from what he meant as 'disgrace'. This discipline was, however, to be inculcated among the people by the leaders themselves setting an example. And for a while Gandhi and Nehru subscribed to non-violence as the ideal method of settling disputes within and between nations. In October 1960 in his address to the United Nations General Assembly Nehru harked back to the teachings of the Mahatma. He said that the basic problem was that of comprehending the tremendous potentialities for prosperity and destruction of the industrial and military revolutions of the nuclear age. **He pleaded for reliance on the right means for attaining right ends.** That was the lesson, he said, which our great leader Gandhi taught us. Though we in India have failed in many ways in following his advice, something of his message still clings to our minds and hearts.

Parliament: A Mixed Balance-sheet

The people of India in the beginning made no living provision and since they would have wanted a representative parliamentary democracy for some time to come. The institution of parliament in the sense of a representative deliberative body, in its traced back to the most ancient times in India to the *1762* and the *1800* mentioned in the *1800*. But Parliament and legislative institutions in their modern form started owe their origin and growth to India's British connection. It would however be wrong to presume that the British institutions as such were at any stage transplanted in India. The Parliament of India and parliamentary institutions as we know them today had an organic growth on Indian soil. They grew through many relentless struggles for freedom from foreign rule and for the establishment of free democratic institutions and through successive doses of constitutional reforms grudgingly and haltingly conceded by the British rulers.

THE FIFTY YEARS: SOME GLIMPSES

The fulfilment of the 'trust with destiny' and the achievement of Independence on the midnight of 14-15 August 1947 was for India the beginning of a long and arduous journey. We completed fifty years of our Independence on 14 August 1997. This is not a very long period in a nation's life to prepare a balance sheet and take stock of our achievements and failures. But much has happened during these years: centuries have been compressed into decades.

At the time of Independence, our parliamentary institutions were already functioning. A constituent assembly had been set up. Under the Indian Independence Act 1947, the British Parliament's powers of governance over India were transferred to the constituent assembly which thereafter became a fully sovereign body. While the main task of the constituent assembly was to frame a constitution for India, while sitting as the ordinary law-making body, it was called the Constituent Assembly (Legislative).

The Indian Constitution came into force on 26 January 1950. The Constituent Assembly (Legislative) became the Provisional Parliament of India and functioned as such until after the first general elections based on adult suffrage. Thus the life of the Parliament of India may be said to have begun on 26 January 1950 even though the two Houses — Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha — came into life only in 1952.

The most significant recollection of the days of the Provisional Parliament would be of the high parliamentary standards that the founding fathers wanted to establish. When H.G. Mudgal, a Congress member, was found to have used his position as a member to further the interests of the Bombay Bullion Association for a consideration, Nehru himself moved for setting up a committee to enquire into the matter. Mudgal lost his membership.

The first Lok Sabha (1952-7) was constituted on 17 April 1952. Though elected by universal adult franchise and as such a truly representative body, it was in a sense, highly elitist. There was a marked dominance, especially in its proceedings, of people who had their education in prestigious and coveted institutions of learning either in India or abroad. Most of them came from an urban background. The single largest professional group was that of lawyers. But the educational standard was not very impressive. Although the House had a preponderance of graduates (37 per cent of the total membership), under-matriculates constituted the next largest group with 23.2 per cent of the total.

The average age of members was forty-five years and eight months. The maximum number of members were in the age group 50-55 years. Twenty-two members forming only 4.4 per cent were women. It was a treat to hear some of their strident speeches. Renu Chakravartty, a communist member from West Bengal, distinguished herself as a great debater with a 'strong yet feminine and musical voice'. Other important lady members were Sucheta Kripalani, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Tarkeshwari Sinha, Vijaya-lakshmi Pandit and M. Chandrasekhar.

With 364 of the 499 members being from the Congress alone, it was clearly a situation of one-party dominance; yet it could not be said that the opposition was inefficient or rendered ineffective by the large Congress majority. In actual practice, it always asserted itself and made its presence felt on every important occasion. On many matters, Congress could not afford to ignore the opinion of opposition members. Nehru himself was known to respect the sentiments of members on the other side, sometimes even against the wishes of members of his own party. The first Lok Sabha consisted of some of the most distinguished men and outstanding parliamentarians, all well-versed in parliamentary procedure and talented, accomplished and skilled in the art of parliamentary debate.

Once, when a member drew Acharya Kripalani's attention to the fact that he was criticizing the Congress Party which had attracted his own wife, the quick-witted Acharya retorted: 'All these years I thought Congressmen were stupid fools. I never knew they were gangsters too who ran away with others' wives.' The House roared with laughter.

Legislation was adopted as the chief instrument of socio-economic engineering. It occupied nearly 50 per cent of the total time of the sittings of the first Lok Sabha. A large number of legislative measures ushering in major reforms in the social, economic and political fields were brought on

the statute book. Seven Private Members' Bills were passed. This remains a record inasmuch as until now the number has not been surpassed during any other Lok Sabha.

During the years 1952-7 the House was in its formative period, laying down healthy foundations for building the strong edifice of parliamentary institutions and procedures. New situations had to be faced, fresh procedures evolved and appropriate rules laid down. And, in all this it fared very well indeed and passed on to the succeeding Houses high standards. Its working earned unanimous acclaim from experienced Indian and foreign observers.

The second Lok Sabha (1957-62) enacted a large number of legislative measures. Among the bills passed, four amended the Constitution (including the one incorporating Goa into the Indian Union). Two Private Members' Bills were brought on the statute book. For the first time, there was a joint sitting of both Houses to resolve the deadlock on the Dowry Prohibition Bill. The importance of the 'Question Hour' as a very potent parliamentary device for ensuring administrative accountability was highlighted by a question which brought to light the Mundhra scandal and resulted in a Minister's (T.T. Krishnamachari) and an ICS Secretary's (H.M. Patel) resignations. The opposition, though weak and fragmented, remained active and effective and never missed an opportunity to force a discussion.

On the last day of the second Lok Sabha, Jawaharlal Nehru remarked: 'considering everything, we have done rather well and considering the state of the world today when every other day we read about *coup d'états* in various countries, it is surprising how we have carried on in our normal way.' It could be said that the tenure of the second Lok Sabha represented a golden period in the history of Indian parliamentary democracy.

In the third Lok Sabha (1962-7), a remarkable change took place in the composition of the House. The lawyers after having formed the largest group in the first and the second Lok Sabha were pushed to second position, first position having been taken by the agriculturists.

The opposition members generally were more active. They included both 'the loudest-lunged parliamentarians' and intellectuals who relied less on the volume of their voice and more on the cogency of their points and argumentative skills. Acharya Kripalani, Ram Manohar Lohia, Madhu Limaye and M.R. Masani were inducted through bye-elections. Madhu Limaye proved very difficult to handle for Speaker Hukam Singh and in a monsoon session he raised privilege issues almost every day, always in his loud and defiant voice.

Treasury benches consisted of a number of persons of equal oratorical capability, intelligence, sound knowledge and deep interest in parliamentary business. They were never silent spectators to what was happening around. On many measures proposed by the government, they fearlessly criticized, expressed genuine doubts, and sometimes even opposed government proposals. On many occasions they joined opposition members in castigating

the government for its fault or in demanding the resignation of a corrupt or inefficient minister.

The third Lok Sabha (1962-7) had 84 women members, by far the largest compared to 27 in the second and 22 in the first Lok Sabha. Indira Gandhi became the first woman prime minister of India. An interesting development was that the law-making function no more remained the major occupation of the House.

The fourth general elections marked another watershed in Indian politics. Although the Congress Party retained its absolute majority in the House, the losses that it suffered were the heaviest so far. The most important developments on the political and parliamentary scene in India during the life of the fourth Lok Sabha (1967-70) were the phenomena of defections and party splits, of the Congress party losing its undisputed dominant position, and of non-Congressism emerging as a rallying point and programme for the opposition parties.

Indira Gandhi's support to V.V. Giri and his election as president, the battle between her and the Congress Syndicate, the controversy of conscience discipline, the split within Congress in the Gandhi Centenary Year (1969), the ouster of Morarji Desai from the finance ministership and the nationalization of major banks, all had their impact on the functioning of the Lok Sabha. The phenomenon of defections characterized this period.

The House was dissolved prematurely on 27 December 1970 and thus had a life of only three years, nine months and ten days.

The fifth Lok Sabha (1971-7) was significantly eventful. Several national and international events gave rise to serious debates, discussions and deliberations on the floor of the House. The Simla Agreement with Pakistan in the wake of India's triumphant victory in the Bangladesh war generated a very lively discussion on the floor of the House. A plethora of legislative measures — some 482 — were brought on the statute book. As many as 19 Constitution Amendment Bills were passed. These represented by far the largest number of such Bills passed by any Lok Sabha. It was through the Constitution 35th and 36th Amendments that Sikkim was integrated with the Union.

Some incidents and developments which were bound to linger in memory were the introduction of a pension scheme for former members of Parliament, the Nagarwala case where the chief cashier of the State Bank of India made a payment of Rs 60 lakhs on the basis of alleged oral instructions, and the persistent defiance of the Chair by distinguished members like Jyotirmoy Basu leading to their suspension from the House. One also remembers the most heated discussion on the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA),² and long debates on a case involving the grant of import licences and the alleged role of the Railway Minister, L.N. Mishra, and a member, Tulmohan Ram. The latter was said to have accepted a bribe for furthering the progress of import licences.

While a Proclamation of Emergency, issued earlier in December 1971

following the Pakistan aggression was already in operation, a fresh Proclamation was issued by the President on 25 June 1975 on grounds of threatened internal disturbance. Opposition leaders linked the declaration of a fresh Emergency with the Allahabad High Court's decision declaring Indira Gandhi's election to the Lok Sabha void and disqualifying her for being chosen as, and for being, a member of either House of Parliament or any State Legislature for a period of six years. After a fourteen-hour debate, the Lok Sabha adopted the resolution approving the Proclamation of Emergency. The most controversial of the decisions taken during the Emergency was the extension of its own life by the Lok Sabha by two years and the adoption of the far-reaching 42nd Constitutional Amendment.

But before completing its extended term, the House was dissolved after being in existence for a period of five years, ten months and six days. The dissatisfaction with the Emergency measures and the movement led by Jayaprakash Narayan had made the position of the Congress government **very uncomfortable.**

The fifth Lok Sabha left behind some bitter memories of emergency legislation, administrative excesses and Indira Gandhi's political isolation. But also, there were many positive achievements and moments of glory for the nation under her leadership — the return of the Congress with more than two-thirds majority in the Lok Sabha, the decisive victory over Pakistan, the creation of independent Bangladesh, the Simla agreement, the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Sikkim becoming an integral part of the Indian Union, the successful underground nuclear explosion which established **India's nuclear capability, and so on.**

The 1977 elections brought a non-Congress government to power. But it was a courageous decision on the part of Indira Gandhi to accept the verdict gracefully, bow out of power and uphold the highest norms of parliamentary democracy. While the ruling party lost, freedom and democracy won, the system proved its legitimacy, vibrancy, resilience and vitality. It was established that even the most powerful could be defeated at the polls and transfer of power could be effected through constitutional, peaceful means.

Some of the significant work done by the sixth Lok Sabha (1977-9) included an amendment to the Constitution (43rd) to revert to a five-year term for the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies instead of a six-year term. Another comprehensive Constitution Amendment (45th) Bill was passed to omit some of the amendments which were inserted by the 42nd Amendment **during the Emergency.**

Almost the entire period was dominated by the Janata Government's efforts to trace out and punish all those closely associated with Indira Gandhi and responsible for the 'atrocities and excesses' of the Emergency period. The inquiry by the Shah Commission, investigations into the Maruti car project,¹ the privilege issues against Indira Gandhi herself, and her arrest, imprison-

ment and expulsion from membership of the House in one of them, all were part of the same exercise.

Before the Janata Government could settle down to positive business, serious fissures between the leaders and diverse groups constituting the Janata Party started coming to the surface. Y.B. Chavan moved a vote of no-confidence in the council of ministers headed by Morarji Desai. It brought another non-Congress council of ministers headed by Charan Singh who never faced the House and resigned. The sixth Lok Sabha was dissolved — after remaining in existence for nearly two years and a half. The Janata experiment had failed.

The seventh Lok Sabha (1980–4) saw Indira Gandhi back in the saddle. The Congress(I) had avenged its defeat of 1977. Almost all the other parties were in bad shape. The single largest group (39.3 per cent) in the seventh Lok Sabha also continued to be 'agriculturist'. In fact, right from the first Lok Sabha onwards, the strength of the agriculturists had been increasing in every successive House. The situation in Punjab dominated the proceedings of the House, particularly during the last two years of its term. The Mandal Commission Report which recommended 27 per cent reservations for the backward classes was discussed in a marathon debate till late at night in the Lok Sabha on 11 August.

On 31 October 1984 the whole nation was shocked to learn of the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her own security guards at her official residence. Rajiv Gandhi succeeded as prime minister.

Held under the shadow of Indira Gandhi's assassination, the 1984 elections gave a three-fourth majority to the Congress, which the party did not command even during Nehru's time. In every sense, the eighth Lok Sabha (1985–9) had a new look. In the International Year of Youth, India had its youngest prime minister. There were also some top stars from the film world, namely Amitabh Bachhan, Vijayantimala Bali and Sunil Dutt.

The distinguishing characteristic of the eighth Lok Sabha was that an unusually large number of its members were new. It also had the distinction of having the largest proportion of educated members. More than 71 per cent were graduates or with higher attainments. The number of under-matriculいたes declined to 7.9 per cent to become the lowest in any Lok Sabha. In terms of professional background, the trend of the last few Lok Sabhas was continued and agriculturists and lawyers constituted the largest groups in the House. As many as 13 Constitution Amendment Bills were passed, ten of these were finally enacted during its lifetime. The two most important were those providing for disqualification of members on grounds of defection and reducing the voting age from 21 years to 18 years.

The Indian Post Office (Amendment) Bill 1986 caused uproarious scenes in the Lok Sabha when it was taken up for consideration. It was however passed by both Houses and sent to the president for his assent. Considerable public debate was generated on the issue. Finally, the bill was returned by

the president to the government for clarification/reconsideration. It is significant that neither was assent refused nor was the bill returned to the Houses of Parliament.

The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Bill 1986 generated lively discussions in the wake of the Shahbano³ case and the bill was passed at a marathon sitting on 5–6 May 1986 at 2.45 a.m.

The eighth Lok Sabha will be remembered in India's parliamentary history for many important debates under various procedural devices. The discussions were marked by pandemonium and procedural wrangles which also saw the suspension of 63 members of the Opposition on a single day — 15 March 1989 — for the remaining days of the week. The same was the case with discussions on matters relating to the purchase of the 155 mm Howitzer guns from the Bofors company of Sweden and the closely linked debate on the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India on the purchase of these guns. A record of sorts was created when the House was adjourned eight times on a single day — 20 July 1989. These developments ultimately culminated in *en masse* resignations by Opposition members from the Lok Sabha. One hundred and twenty-four members resigned their seats in the House. Of these, 107 resigned during the Fourteenth Session (Part I) alone; 73 tendered their resignations on a single day — 24 July 1989.

The eighth Lok Sabha was a historic House in many respects. It will be remembered for beginning the system of Departmental Standing Committees.

In the ninth Lok Sabha (1989–91), though the Congress was still the largest single party, the number of parties represented was an all-time record. There were as many as 24 parties. Also, it was for the first time that no party secured a clear majority. A minority government of the Janata Dal was formed by V.P. Singh with the support of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Left parties from outside. The ninth Lok Sabha had the unique distinction of having the single largest party — the Indian National Congress(I) with 197 members — as the officially recognized Opposition and the former prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi as Leader of the Opposition with the rank of a cabinet minister. Incidentally he was the first prime minister to sit as Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

The new members in the Lok Sabha included Mayawati of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) of UP, Uma Bharati of the BJP from Madhya Pradesh, Uma Gajapati Raju of the Congress from Andhra, Subhashini Ali of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) from UP, M.J. Akbar of the Congress from Bihar and Atinderpal Singh, Simranjit Singh Mann and Bimal Khalsa (widow of Beant Singh, assassin of Indira Gandhi) from Punjab. Simranjit Singh never took his seat in the Lok Sabha as he was not allowed to enter and take oath while wearing a sword.

The situation in Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Assam dominated the proceedings.

On 7 August, quite suddenly it seemed, V.P. Singh announced in the

two Houses his government's 'momentous decision of social justice' to implement the Report of the Mandal Commission. The announcement, it was alleged, was politically motivated. Intense and massive agitation launched by students, teachers, lawyers and others accompanied by the self-immolation of young boys and girls on open streets rocked the Lok Sabha.

V.P. Singh's government could not complete even a year in office. Following the withdrawal of support by the BJP and its allies in retaliation against the arrest of L.K. Advani and the stopping of his Rath Yatra to Ayodhya for the construction of a Ram temple, it was obvious that V.P. Singh had lost majority support in the Lok Sabha. However, he refused to resign and instead offered to prove his majority on the floor of the House.

On 7 November, the motion of confidence was defeated by 356 to 151 votes with six members abstaining. This established another record inasmuch as it was for the first time that a government was defeated on a vote of confidence. The president invited Chandra Shekhar to form the government.

On 6 March, Chandra Shekhar referred to the crisis created by the boycott by the Congress(I) Party⁵ and said 'I am unable to lead the Government and propose to meet the president and offer the resignation of the council of ministers of my government.' The same day, the president in a letter to the prime minister conveyed his acceptance of the resignation. The week-long political uncertainty ended on 13 March, with the president dissolving the ninth Lok Sabha.

The biggest casualty during the ninth Lok Sabha period was institutional; the rules, conventions and time-honoured traditions in many respects were given the go-bye. There were more than the usual instances of pandemonium, noisy and uproarious scenes, walk-outs, crowding in the well of the House and raising of slogans, frequent adjournments and the like. When the ninth Lok Sabha was dissolved on 13 March, no less a person than the distinguished parliamentarian and socialist leader Madhu Limaye wrote that it had 'at last made its inglorious exit.' Limaye added, the entire tenure of the ninth Lok Sabha was disappointing and the last day was a day of national shame. At a time when the nation was passing through grave economic crisis, members were allowed to vote for themselves increased pension, allowances and facilities by relaxing rules. The most outrageous and indefensible of these was proportionate pension for life on completing only one year as a member. By this one act, members of all parties proved that they were more concerned with petty self-interest than with larger national issues and could not care less for public opinion or susceptibilities. A wave of nationwide indignation followed the hasty adoption of the bill by the two Houses. And, finally the President did not give his assent to the bill. Secondly financial business including voting on demands for billions of rupees for the Union, Vote on Account for 1991-2, Supplementary Grants for 1990-1 and the budgets of four States and one Union Territory under President's Rule were passed within minutes without any scrutiny or

discussion, making a farce of the role of Parliament. Also, as many as 18 bills were passed again without discussion, within less than two hours, setting a record of sorts but a rather dismal one.

Fortunately, the ninth Lok Sabha's tenure was brief. The experiment of minority governments run with outside support having flopped, the country was back at square one facing another general election within less than two years.

The tenth Lok Sabha (1991-6) was constituted under the shadow of the grim tragedy of the gruesome assassination of Rajiv Gandhi who was not only a candidate for Lok Sabha membership but also the most likely person to take over as prime minister after the elections. The tenth General Election was the most brutal and violent election in Indian history.

Congress(I) emerged as by far the largest party in the House but a little short of absolute majority to form a stable government on its own. The sympathy generated by Rajiv Gandhi's assassination did add a few seats to the Congress(I)'s tally but that was not enough. The party was almost completely routed in two of the most populous States — UP and Bihar. The unanimous election of P.V. Narasimha Rao first as president of the Congress and then as the leader of the Congress Parliamentary Party and his appointment as the first prime minister of India from a southern state strengthened the integration sentiment.

During the period 1991-4, the Congress government headed by Narasimha Rao strengthened its numerical position in the Lok Sabha and acquired a simple majority largely through managing splits in Opposition parties and allowing Opposition members to defect to its ranks allegedly through outright bribery and the promise of ministerships and the like. The defectors were not disqualified from membership as they were held rightly or wrongly to be covered by the provisions pertaining to splits in parties.

In an unusual move to placate Members of Parliament and reinforce their vested interest in somehow continuing to be members for the full term, each member was allotted a crore of rupees yearly to be spent on developmental work under his direction in his constituency. From the procedural angle, the most noteworthy development during the tenth Lok Sabha was setting up a full-fledged system of 17 Departmental Standing Parliamentary Committees, *inter alia* entrusted with the task of making an in-depth scrutiny of budget proposals and demands for grants.

More than half of the members of the eleventh Lok Sabha (1996-7) were entirely new to parliamentary life. They had never been members even of a panchayat. Also, persons with criminal records had the largest ever representation in this House. Again, it is remembered as having had the shortest lifespan of all Houses and the inability of political parties to form a stable government with the support of a majority of the members. In fact, the strange phenomenon was that the two largest parties were outside the government and some 13-14 tiny parties of diverse and opposite persuasions cobbled

a majority in the lust for sharing the spoils of power. There were two prime ministers. The whole show lasted less than two years.

THE CHANGING FACE: AN OVERVIEW

An overview of developments in parliamentary institutions since independence reveals some very interesting and some disturbing facts. Parliament which was once considered to be primarily a law-making body has gradually become a multi-functional institution. Law-making is no longer the most important of its functions either qualitatively or quantitatively. From about 50 per cent it has come down to occupy less than 20 per cent of its time.

The character of Parliament has changed as a result of changes in membership composition. During 1947-62, it was largely elitist, urban, English-educated and Western-oriented. Even though the non-matriculates constituted the second largest group on the basis of educational background, the single largest professional group was lawyers.

Our Parliament in the early years could legitimately boast of having some very outstanding and accomplished parliamentarians who could do honour to any Parliament in the world. But, in the last decades, even though the number of graduates became the highest ever and the number of non-matriculates was reduced from about 25 per cent to about 6-7 per cent, we have had more representatives coming from mofussil towns and villages. The largest professional groups have come to be those of agriculturists and whole-time 'political and social workers'.

Until 1977, that is for the first thirty years of Independence, Congress remained the dominant party with an undisputed majority in Parliament. Interestingly however, the opposition though small in number was more effective and had greater impact in the earlier years. Perhaps it was so because of the high quality and character of membership on both sides and largely because a stable government and secure leadership could show greater magnanimity and accommodate opposition viewpoints without losing face.

The enactment of the Anti-Defection Law or the 10th Schedule of the Constitution solved no problems. In fact it created fresh problems and greatly conditioned and changed the behaviour of the legislators and the functioning of the legislatures for the worse. Today, we have an unending debate in regard to falling standards in the conduct of legislators as evidenced by the poor quality of debates, poor attendance in the houses of legislatures, the unruly behaviour of members, scenes of pandemonium and the like. Legislatures and their members — the elected representatives of the people — all over the country have lost the respect of the people. Members no longer command the regard and reverence they did earlier.

Prime Minister Rao had spoken about the criminalization of politics and the politicization of criminals. Prime Minister Gujral talked of corruption and crime in politics and of his helplessness to do anything about it. He has

gone so far as to ask the people to launch a satyagraha against corruption. Political parties becoming multi-castes, legislators having members' masters and so on with a mind records rampant political corruption, the sale and purchase of legislators to obtain a majority and stay in power, mortgaging the interest of the nation and of future generations for self interest in the business of power politics, these are the most common topics of popular discussion today. The people are agitated and helpless.

Attention needs to be drawn towards a distinct change in the content, canvas and culture of debates right from the first Lok Sabha days. In the earlier Lok Sabhas, there was much greater emphasis on the discussion of national and international issues. Regional issues and local problems were left to be taken up in the state legislatures. People would flock to hear Nehru initiate debates on the international situation, on foreign affairs and so on, which were followed by high-level discussions from a national angle. It seems that gradually, but increasingly, members are attaching greater importance to regional and even local problems. What perhaps may cause the greatest concern is not only the shift in emphasis but the fundamental change in approach and outlook. Sometimes it appears as if we are more and more looking at national problems from regional, communal, linguistic or otherwise parochial angle rather than the other way round.

The system withstood and survived the Chinese aggression, Nehru's demise, Congress splits, wars with Pakistan, severe floods and droughts, external and internal emergency, Naxalite and terrorist onslaughts and so on. Parliament and state legislatures functioned through and despite these crises. But the present national scenario is hardly exhilarating if not depressing. We seem to have arrived at a blind alley. From here no path seems to lead forward. We have to think of the future of parliamentary institutions and of the ideals of freedom and democracy, stability and accountability.

In a parliamentary polity, there can be nothing sadder or more dangerous than the credentials of representatives becoming suspect and the people and their representatives becoming increasingly alienated from one another. Today, we are in a situation where the sanctity of means has lost all value, meaning and relevance. If dacoits, smugglers, gangsters and foreign agents can help put us or sustain us in power, we are prepared to compromise with them. We are prepared to bribe fellow legislators to cling to our chairs. The people feel that the new breed of politicians in all parties are selfish, power greedy, dishonest hypocrites and power merchants for whom the nation comes last and the welfare of the people is at the bottom of their priorities. Their only concern is to amass wealth and somehow get to and stay in power. They are so busy in the struggle for survival that they have no time or energy left for serving the people. In the words of R. Venkataraman, they are 'no longer competitors in the endeavour to serve the nation but are bitter enemies drawn in battle array.'

Parliamentary institutions are very tender plants and bound to wilt if

not handled with care. We must, therefore, attach the highest priority in deliberating why things have come to such a pass. Perhaps, something can still be done to restore the legislatures and legislators to their traditional place of high honour and esteem in the affections of the people and bring about a new renaissance of democratic faith and parliamentary culture.

One of the most cardinal and fundamental functions of Parliament in a parliamentary system is to provide a responsible and responsive representative government. A constitutional way would have to be found to meet the situation of a hung Lok Sabha when no party or leader is able to form a government. Parliament has to be made to discharge its responsibility. It cannot be left only to the whims and machinations of professional politicians or parties. Also, dissolving the House and forcing frequent elections can provide no solution.

One simple remedy may be found in Article 86 of the Constitution, whereunder the president can send a message to the Lok Sabha asking it to elect its leader. The person so elected may be asked to form the government and the government so formed may be made removable only by a constructive vote of no-confidence, i.e. it goes only when someone else can be simultaneously elected.

If Parliament has to retain its relevance and legitimacy, some such steps have to be taken.

NEED FOR PARLIAMENTARY REFORMS

The information explosion, the technological revolution and the growing magnitude and complexities of modern administration have cast upon Parliament other vastly extended responsibilities. Inadequacy of time, information and expertise with Parliament results in poor-quality legislation and unsatisfactory parliamentary surveillance over administration. It is said that during the entire period of nearly 200 years of their rule in India, the British passed only about 400 laws, while in about fifty years since Independence Parliament had passed nearly 4000 laws. The big difference was, as B.K. Nehru put it, that the 400 laws were obeyed or had to be obeyed while the present-day 4000 pieces of legislation are not obeyed. Those to whom many of these laws relate do not even know or understand them. Over-legislation becomes counter-productive.

Inadequacy of education and training in the sophisticated operational mechanics of parliamentary polity and the working procedures of modern parliamentary institutions have adversely affected the performance of both legislators and the bureaucracy. Little effort has been made thus far to develop the essential prerequisites for the success of parliamentary polity — discipline, character, a high sense of public morality, an ideologically oriented two-party system and willingness to hear and accommodate minority views. Several of the archaic practices and time-consuming procedures most unsuitable for

present day needs are being continued unnecessarily. Members irrespective of their party affiliation have themselves become a new caste and a part of the establishment and co-opted in the spoils with increased perks and payments and crores of public funds at their disposal.

The legitimacy of governments and representative institutions under the system are inextricably linked to free and fair elections and to the system being able to bring to power persons who truly represent the people's will and have the necessary ability to govern. Recent efforts notwithstanding, due to the role of mafia gangs, muscle power and money power, free and fair elections are very difficult, if not impossible, to hold. The representative credentials of our elected legislators have come be questioned. There are hardly any ideological or programmatic considerations in voting. Almost all parties and candidates are busy building their vote banks on the basis of caste, communal, linguistic or other such identities or through clandestine control of the electoral processes. Distortions have also crept into the representative character of Parliament through the operation of the electoral system. The majority of those declared elected happen to have secured only a minority of votes. Therefore, it seems it is necessary to reform the electoral system and the political party system before Parliamentary reforms can be thought of.

Politics and membership of Parliament have emerged as a whole-time, highly lucrative profession for the majority of those involved. Following the changed composition of the Houses, there has been a faster erosion of all the old values and increasing disorder and pandemonium on the floor during 'Zero Hour' and at other times. There is general apathy among members, ministers and the public at large toward the work of Parliament. Absenteeism among members has assumed alarming proportions and defections for money and office have been a common phenomenon.

Parliament is a communication link between the people and the government. Bad public relations has given a poor image to Parliament and its members. People talk of happenings in Parliament and of the Members of Parliament as things quite remote and different from themselves. Few feel that Parliament is their own institution and its members are people from among themselves. A senior parliamentarian (Hiren Mukherjee), speaking of 'politics' generally, bemoans:

It will not be far wrong to say, sorrowfully, that there never was a time in living memory when politics and politicians were, almost rightfully, as denigrated, even degraded, and sometimes detested, in the eyes of our people as they are at the moment.

It is, therefore, necessary to establish a new rapport between the people and Parliament. The two must be brought closer to each other. Parliament belongs to the people and not to MPs. The latter themselves are responsible to Parliament and to the people outside. It is the ordinary people who have to be enabled to feel that they are participants in the decision-making and

legislative processes and that through Parliament their voice can reach the government and that it counts.

It is necessary to take steps to improve the quality of members, to reduce expenditure on Parliament and its members, to improve information supply and provide other and better support services to members in the discharge of their duties, to plan legislative work and improve the quality of legislation, to subject constitutional amendments to closer committee scrutiny, to raise economic policy to non-party levels, to codify parliamentary privileges, to reform and regulate the functioning of parties, to reorganize the parliamentary timetable and to rationalize and modernize various parliamentary procedures.

The case for reforming Parliament is unexceptionable. What is needed is a full-scale review. We have to be prepared for fundamental institutional, structural-functional, procedural and organizational changes. The overriding guiding norm and purpose of all parliamentary reforms should be to make both government and Parliament more relevant to meeting the challenges of the times and the changing national needs in the next fifty or hundred years.

NOTES

1. The term 'Syndicate' was given to a powerful group of Congress leaders comprising K. Kamaraj, party president, Atulva Ghosh, a powerful leader of eastern India, S. Nijalingappa, chief minister of Karnataka, S.K. Paul, political boss of Mumbai (then Bombay) and Union Minister N. Sanjiva Reddy, Speaker of the Lok Sabha (1967-9) and later President of India. The 'Syndicate' played a crucial role in ensuring Shastri's smooth ascent to prime-ministership after Nehru and, after Shastri, in Indira Gandhi's election as prime minister in January 1966, following an election by the Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP) in which her opponent was Morarji Desai, a senior minister and Congress leader. Her relations with it however deteriorated following differences over several major issues and came to an open rift in July 1969, when the Congress Parliamentary Board (CPB), dominated by it, nominated N. Sanjiva Reddy as the party's candidate in the presidential election necessitated by President Zakir Hussain's death. Indira Gandhi, who wanted the nomination to go to Vice-President V.V. Giri, walked out of the CPB meeting and supported Giri's candidature. She defied the party's whip and called for a conscience vote. Giri was elected with the help of the leftist and other regional parties and the Congress was split.
2. The Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) enacted in 1971 provided for preventive detention without trial with provisions for periodic review. It was widely misused during the Emergency (1975-7).
3. This refers to a small car project launched by Sanjay Gandhi, younger son of Indira Gandhi, who called most of the shots in the government during the Emergency. Taken over by the government after it failed to get off ground, it now produces in collaboration with Suzuki of Japan, several types of passenger vehicles under the brand name Maruti. A one-man commission

Rule of Law: Protecting the Weak against the Strong

The Greeks believed that 'natural forces' which control the universe have a predominant influence on man. However, to Socrates justice under the law was indispensable for the basic need to preserve order in society. So when the jury of Athens tried and convicted him and sentenced him to death, Socrates demonstrated his fidelity to this principle and suffered the death sentence, despite the sure possibility of escape offered to him by Crito who was prepared to 'pave his way out of the jail with gold'. Socrates asked Crito, 'Can you deny that by this act which you are contemplating you intend, so far as you have the power, to destroy us, the laws, and the whole State as well? Do you imagine that a city can continue to exist and not be turned upside down, if the legal judgements which are pronounced in it have no force but are nullified and destroyed by private persons?' Socrates upheld the supremacy of law; of the Rule of Law.

Romans recognized that true law was the 'right reason in agreement with nature' and was of universal application, unchanging and everlasting. Cicero exhorted, 'there will not be different laws at Rome and at Athens, or different laws now and in the future, but one eternal and unchangeable law will be valid for all nations and for all times, and there will be one master and one ruler, that is, God, over us all, for He is the author of this law, its promulgator, and its enforcing judge.' The later Christian concept of Natural Law, of which St Thomas Aquinas was the most powerful exponent, drew upon 'jus naturale' of the Romans which expressed a higher and unalterable standard. These are the ideological precursors of the modern concept of Rule of Law.

The modern concept of Rule of Law, which embodies the essence of the legal and political tradition of England, has its echoes in the exhortations of Bracton, Thomas More and Sir Edward Coke. The English principle of Rule of Law is the culmination of a long, and sometimes bitter, struggle against royal tyranny. From 'Runnymede to the scaffold at White Hall, the English have taught their Kings a lesson' and have not had much trouble ever since. To define Rule of Law is, in a way, to limit an otherwise broad principle or rather a combination of principles and a range of legal values. Rule of Law, according to scholars, is 'a rare and protean principle of our political tradition. Unlike other ideals, it has withstood the ravages of constitutional time and remains a contemporary clarion-call to political

justice. Apparently transcending partisan concern, it is embraced and venerated by virtually all shades of political opinion.

'Show me the man, I will show you the Law' is the very definition of tyranny. The exhortation of Rule of Law is 'Howsoever high you may be, the law is above you.'

DISCIPLINING PUBLIC POWER

The principal preoccupation of Rule of Law is to discipline public power and set standards for the conduct of public men in their exercise of governmental powers. Evolution of the political organization of man has as its recurrent theme the ascertainment and determination of the acceptable limits of the coercive powers of State over its subjects. Rule of Law alters the dimensions of the essential enquiry. It requires that every action of a governmental authority must show a 'legal pedigree'. That is not all. Rule of Law does not merely content itself with ensuring legality. It goes further to speculate on the limits on the extent of power government can have. The question, therefore, is not merely as to what legal authority the government has for what it seeks to do. It is more fundamental: 'what legal powers ought the government to have'. The doctrine of Rule of Law answers, in part at least this question by implying a government of law and not of men. It means something that is the opposite of arbitrary government.

For instance, one of the fundamental postulates of Rule of Law is that a man cannot be punished except in accordance with a law in force at the time of commission of the act and not a law made with retrospective operation. This indeed is the content of Article 20(1) of the Constitution of India which prohibits retrospective penal laws. The major premise of the Rule of Law over the years mandates that law shall be general, equal and certain; it shall be administered by independent judges; that the legislature be separate from the judiciary and the executive and that there be no punishment except as provided by a pre-existing law. But then there are laws and laws. A despotic monarch can make tyrannical laws. Even in a democracy an insensitive majority can enact laws hostile to the minorities. What then is the ethical touchstone for the morality of the law? There are various safeguards which self-governing peoples have devised. One of them is to provide a Bill of Rights. There are others. They all reflect the philosophy and ideology of Rule of Law.

We have in our own constitutional history this question confronting us. Article 21 of our Constitution mandates that 'no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law'. In the Gopalan case, the expression 'according to procedure established by law' in Article 21 was interpreted in positivist terms and notions of natural justice, reasonableness or due process could not be read into it. Indeed Justice S.R. Das observed that 'If a law provided that the cook of the Bishop of Rochester be boiled in oil, it would be valid under Article 21.'

But twenty-seven years later the limited construction of Article 21 was replaced by a more definite concept. In *Maneka Gandhi's case*, the Supreme Court held that the procedure established by law must be 'right and just and fair and not arbitrary, fanciful or oppressive; otherwise it would be no procedure at all and that requirement of Article 21 would not be satisfied.'

In its main purpose Rule of Law seeks to protect the weak against the strong, the few against the many, the unpopular against the popular and, in a democracy, seeks to prevent denial of justice by a shifting amoral majority under an elective dictatorship. Under the Indian constitutional regime, Rule of Law is a basic and unalterable feature of the Constitution. Rule of Law postulates that the decisions should be made by the application of known principles and rules and in general such decisions should be predictable and the citizen should know where he is.¹ If a decision is taken without any principle or without any rule, it is not predictable and such a decision is the antithesis of a decision taken in accordance with the rule of law. We may recall the words of Justice Mathew who said:

The rule of law postulates the pervasiveness of the spirit of law throughout the whole range of government in the sense of excluding arbitrary official action in any sphere. Rule of Law is an expression to give reality to something which is not readily expressible. That is why Sir Ivor Jennings said that it is an untidy horse. Rule of Law is based upon the liberty of the individual and has as its object, the harmonizing of the opposing notions of individual liberty and public order. The notion of justice maintains the balance between the two.

In the Indian Constitution, Article 14 combines the English doctrine of the Rule of Law and the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the American Federal Constitution. The protection of legitimate expectations is at the root of the constitutional principle of Rule of Law. It is the essence of the Rule of Law that every authority within the state including the executive government should consider itself bound by and obey the law. The Supreme Court has endorsed the view that even if a governmental authority professes to apply a standard higher than the one which it is enjoined by law to apply, it shall be held down to the standards it professes to apply. The Supreme Court cited Justice Frankfurter's dictum that 'an executive agency must be rigorously held to the standards by which it professes its action to be judged. . . . This judicially evolved rule of administrative law is now firmly established and, if I may add, rightly so. He that takes the procedural sword shall perish with the sword.'

TWO TECHNIQUES OF CONTROLLING POWER

There are really two principal techniques to control power. The first is to prescribe legal limits to power. The second is adjudicative techniques. This, in the English Tradition, is the well-known role of the ordinary courts of

the last. *Rule of Law* must improve on official nostrums and power. As Professor Atiyah observes:

Fishes and ducks often go to the water for paper, but often take an inappropriate pleasure in paper and will have a healthy respect for many of its important functions, even in the development of the English system, the members are ultimately what matters is a belief in the fundamental integrity of the community, and the endorsement of such a fundamental principle was the premiss of the English belief that an independent judiciary and a government with the power to make and to enforce laws were more important than any number of grand theories and theories about the Rights of Man.

In short, *Rule of Law* means that law is imposed by Parliament, is faithfully executed by officials, that property is not expropriated without adequate working conditions, that law should be accessible to all, that the courts that interpret law be independent, and that power should not be arbitrarily exercised. In addition, the *Rule of Law* implies some general qualities of all public law, that it should be certain, that it is legitimate to interfere so as to be preferable and not counterproductive in its operation, and that it be applied equally, without respect to the content of it.

Rule of Law is not merely a mask, a veil, subjective and value-laden. It is pervasive and penetrating omnipresence. Legal history amply illustrates this. In the thirteenth century, Bracton maintained that even kings were subject to law. He said, 'the king shall not be subject to man, but to God and the Law since law makes the King'. Justice according to law would then be applicable both to the king and the subject. The series of contests between the Crown and Parliament in England led to a rejection of the Divine Right of Kings. The Bill of Rights of 1689 finally put the monarchy under the law.

In the historic case, two king's messengers, who broke into and entered the house of a person called Entick, were sued by him. The officials pleaded justification under a warrant issued by the secretary of state, who claimed that the power to issue warrants was essential to government and was indeed the only means of quelling clamours and sedition. The court held that, in the absence of a statute or a judicial precedent, the practice was illegal. It was a victory for individual liberty and democratic principle. The words of Lord Camden in that case, uttered over two centuries ago, are worth recalling: 'what would the Parliament say if the judges should take upon themselves to mould an unlawful power into a convenient authority, by new restrictions? That would be not judgement, but legislation. . . . And with respect to the argument of State necessity, or a distinction that has been aimed at between State offences and others, the common law does not understand that kind of reasoning, nor do our books take notice of any such distinction.'

Then again after the death of Queen Elizabeth, the throne of England passed to James VI as King James I who believed in the divine rights of kings and declared that the king's will was supreme. He summoned the common

law judges before him and ordered their courts to cease to interfere with the prerogative courts such as the Star Chambers.

Sir Edward Coke, then Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, repudiated the king's claim and asserted that judges would follow the common law and the king was under the law. Chief Justice Coke declared that those who govern were also subject to law.

In the Watergate affair, the president of the United States of America was requested by the special prosecutor appointed by the Attorney-General to produce tape-recordings of discussions of the president with his advisers. The president claimed privilege for the tapes. The Supreme Court of the United States of America held that this claim had to be considered 'in the light of our historic commitment to the rule of law'. The Supreme Court rejected the claim and ordered the tapes to be produced as 'the generalized assertion of privilege must yield to the demonstrated, specific need for evidence in a pending criminal trial'.

In India, when the Constitution was amended to protect and validate the election of a prime minister and sought to take the issue out of courts' purview, the Supreme Court declared the purported constitutional amendment invalid and reiterated that the Rule of Law was a basic feature of the Indian Constitution.

SUPREMACY OF LAW

Rule of Law as a great legal and political tradition is the priceless inheritance of our civilization. It upholds the supremacy of the law. In promoting the Rule of Law, the Indian judiciary has played an exemplary role. Long years ago, speaking of the American judicial system and of the Supreme Court of United States, William Wirt said, 'if the judiciary were struck from our system there would be little of value that would remain. The government cannot exist without it. It would be as rational to talk of a solar system without a Sun as to talk of a government in the United States without the doctrine of the supremacy of the Supreme Court'.

That can proudly be said of the Indian courts too. The legitimacy of the judicial process lies, in the words of an American lawyer, in 'the wisdom and moral force of great judges, procedural fairness and regularity. In the constitutional sphere law has long drawn strength from traditional and evocative precepts that symbolize the historic struggles for freedom from government oppression. The principal source of legitimacy, I believe, is the all-important but fragile faith that the courts apply to current constitutional controversies a continuing body of "law" . . . "that have a separate existence and command an allegiance greater than that due to any individual merely by virtue of office or personal prestige". Application of a body of principles that have an existence outside the pale of subjective values of the judge is, in itself, an affirmation of an important facet of Rule of Law.'

S. SAHAY

Federalism: The Ascendancy of Regional Parties

If it had to happen, it is just as well it happened in the fiftieth year of Independence. I am referring to the decision by President K R. Narayanan to return for consideration by the council of ministers its recommendation in October 1997 that President's Rule be imposed in Uttar Pradesh (UP) and that the state assembly be dissolved. The Gujral government chose not to pursue the matter further.

For the sake of clarity, the circumstances in which this came about need to be mentioned. There existed a coalition government in UP formed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). The arrangement was that the two would rule the state, by turns, for a period of six months. What would happen after a year was left open.

Mayawati of the BSP became chief minister for the first six months. When her term was over and the BJP's turn came to have its nominee as the chief minister, there were some hiccups, but Kalyan Singh ultimately formed the government. However, from the very first day, Mayawati started raising objections to the policy decisions taken by Kalyan Singh, in particular to his order that the provisions of the law that sought to punish atrocities committed on the scheduled castes and tribes must not be misused.

The crunch came when Kalyan Singh referred certain land deals entered into during the Mayawati regime to the Central Bureau of Investigation for inquiry. Another view is that Sitaram Kesri, then Congress president, held out before Kanshi Ram, the leader of BSP, the prospect of forming a government with Congress's help.

The BSP withdrew its support to the Kalyan Singh government and suggested dissolution of the state assembly.

The governor, Romesh Bhandari, who ought to have exercised his right to act as a constitutional functionary on his own, chose to sound his friends and well-wishers and decided to give Kalyan Singh forty-eight hours to prove his majority in the assembly. The assumption by his political masters was that, in the short time given to Kalyan Singh, he would never be able to drum up a majority in the house. Clearly, they had not reckoned with his capacity to cause a split in the state Congress legislature party and to cause defections in the BSP ranks.

Romesh Bhandari had laid down two other conditions: that three

observers sent by him would watch the assembly proceedings and that the house must continue to meet until the confidence vote had taken place, not by show of hands, but by lobby division. The speaker very correctly told the governor that while he was free to send any person he chose to the gallery reserved for him in the House, there was no question of his allowing governor's observers to watch the proceedings of the House. Incidentally, the meeting of the presiding officers held subsequently roundly condemned the governor's action and made it clear that he could not interfere with the proceedings of the House.

Be that as it may, Kalyan Singh did prove his majority by securing 212 votes, but not before there was unprecedented violence in the house. The governor kept filing report after report to the president and suggested imposition of President's Rule and dissolution of the assembly. The cabinet considered the suggestion and, reportedly under the pressure of Mulayam Singh Yadav and Sitaram Kesri, decided to recommend the imposition of President's Rule and dissolution of the house. This, it may be emphasized, was done despite the opinion of legal experts, that the suggested measures would be constitutionally indefensible in view of the court's ruling in the Bommai case.

The president too consulted the attorney-general. When the home secretary saw him with the cabinet's recommendation, he went through it with the constitutional comb and asked uncomfortable questions concerning the constitutionality of the recommendation. Not satisfied with the home secretary's replies he sent back the recommendation for the cabinet's reconsideration.

I have narrated the UP incident at some length because this is the first time in independent India that the president has refused to sign a presidential proclamation on the take-over of the administration of a state and thus acted as the guardian of the interests of the state, as distinguished from the convenience of the centre. And it should be remembered that the President's Rule has been declared in the states no less than 106 times.

The question is why did the Gujral cabinet cave in and not return the same advice to the president. Had it done so, the president would have been obliged to sign the proclamation because Article 74 (1) makes it abundantly clear that the president can send back any advice for reconsideration only once.

Could the president have disagreed a second time and chosen to refer the matter to the Supreme Court for its advisory opinion? I have grave doubts about it because, in my view, the president cannot refer anything to the Supreme Court for its opinion without the advice of his council of ministers.

What the president could have done was to sit on the advice till his term ended, for there is no time-limit for the president to accept the advice of his councils. Some presidents have, in the past, used this power to stunning effect.

What is more important than this hypothetical question is: why did the Gujral government capitulate? It capitulated because the prime minister himself was not sure about the desirability of the measure but was too weak and unassertive to resist the imposition of President's Rule in the first place. The regional parties too kept quiet while Mulayam Singh Yadav mounted pressure from inside the cabinet and Sitaram Kesri from outside. However, once the president returned the proposed proclamation, the regional parties freely and boldly opposed the return of the same advice to the president; among them were the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), the Telegu Desam Party (TDP) and the Tamil Maanila Congress (TMC). Mulayam Singh Yadav left the cabinet meeting in a huff. **Sitaram Kesri's bluff was called.**

Both President K.R. Narayanan and the leaders of the regional parties were presumably influenced by the Supreme Court ruling in what is popularly known as the Bommai case. In a bunch of cases a nine-judge bench was considering the constitutionality of the imposition of President's Rule in Karnataka, in Meghalaya, in Nagaland and in the four States that were ruled by the BJP. One peculiarity of the case was that, in some instances, the lapse of time had made any relief impossible but the lawyers appearing in the cases suggested that the court lay down guidelines for the future. This was done. Baldly stated, the court ruled that a proclamation under Article 356 was subject to judicial review on a limited number of grounds because there could not be an omnibus judicially manageable standard of judging the president's action, which was political in nature.

The court could come into the picture if the proclamation issued by the president was based on no material at all. It could intervene if the proclamation was based on the governor's report which was vitiated by assumptions that were totally unsustainable in law (this undoubtedly was the case with Romesh Bhandari's recommendation). It could intervene if the proclamation had been made upon a consideration which was wholly extraneous or irrelevant to the purpose for which the power under Article 356 was intended, namely breakdown in the constitutional machinery of the state, and it could intervene if there had been malafide exercise of power.

THREE PRIMARY CHECKS

Thus what the fiftieth year of India's Independence, and the forty-ninth year of the working of the Indian Constitution (it was adopted in 1949 and came into force in 1950) has shown is that there are two primary checks on the centre's power to destabilize a state-government; the Bommai ruling and an upright president. The third check comes in the shape of the attitude of the regional parties that have, in the past, suffered from the take-over of the state administration by the president, but its efficacy is predicated upon whether there is a single-party rule or a coalition at the centre.

The UP drama has once again brought to the fore the question of whether Article 356 should be abolished or merely amended so as to prevent its misuse. Before we discuss Article 356 or the other Emergency powers given to the centre by the Constitution, the question whether our constitution-makers were wise in providing these must be examined. Simply put, Indian history had revealed two stark facts. First, that without a strong centre Delhi's writ could not run for any length of time. Once the emperor became weak, the regional warlords proclaimed their independence. Equally, a country of India's size could not be meaningfully administered unless there was decentralization of administration.

It must be said in favour of our constitution-makers that they not only correctly assessed the problem at hand, but in the circumstances in which, and the rush with which, independence and partition of the country was forced upon them, left them with no choice but to provide for a strong centre and arrive at the best compromise that was possible on the numerous questions that faced the nation: the issue of separate electorates, which was refused, the issue of language on which the compromise was that though Hindi was made the official language of the Union, English was given a lease of life for fifteen years, possibly more if parliament so willed.

Not much notice is taken of the special and temporary provisions in the Constitution, wherein not only has Kashmir been accorded a special place, but there have been special provisions with respect to Maharashtra and Gujarat, Nagaland, Assam and Manipur, to Andhra Pradesh, Sikkim, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, and Goa. Equally important is the fact that the governor has been accorded more discretionary powers than the president of India because the former has the special task of looking after minority interests in the states.

Add to this the problem that when the British left they declared that the paramountcy over 561 princely states had lapsed. Thus each was free to decide as it wished. It was the great sagacity of Sardar Patel that made the unification of India possible. How many people remember now, or realize, that at the time of the framing of the Constitution the states were divided into Part A, B, C and D, depending upon whether they formed parts of the British or the princely states or were directly administered by the centre.

The point to note is that India does not fit into the federal mould crafted by constitutional scholars. It is not a federation in the classical sense because it is not the federating units which surrendered some of their powers for the greater good of the country and retained the residue. Here the states can be truncated, abolished or created by law by parliament, which can increase the size of a state, diminish it, alter the boundaries, rename it or form a new state. The only stipulation is that the president must recommend such a measure and the affected state legislature is consulted.

The constitution-makers chose to call India a Union of States and proceeded to provide measures that would ensure the unity and integrity of

the nation. The question has often been asked whether it was at all wise on the part of our constitution makers to have adopted more or less wholesale the provisions of the Government of India Act 1935. As has been pointed out by experts, even of the stature of Chief Justice M.C. Mahajan of the Supreme Court, the act was intended by the British to keep the country divided. As it happened, the princely states did not join the federation, and had they joined it the British expectation was that the Muslims and the princes would be acting in a manner that would suit the British.

Justice Mahajan made a cogent case for India becoming a unitary state, with the provinces being ruled by governors. His argument was that that alone would ensure the unity and integrity of the country. He even wrote to Nehru and discussed the issue with President Rajendra Prasad. The latter was impressed by his arguments but was not sure whether the steps suggested by him were practical.

President Rajendra Prasad agreed with Justice Mahajan that the 1935 act was intended to keep in check what were then known as provinces and were under the influence of the Congress. However, he maintained that the idea of the autonomy of the provinces was very strong and it was really the chief ministers of the provinces who belonged to the Congress who insisted upon the provisions relating thereto. The states (princely) were integrated practically at the end and virtually no objection was raised on their behalf.

The president told Justice Mahajan: So you can understand the difficulty that will be faced in introducing the change which you suggest. Some of us were even then anxious to give some unifying power, and some of the provisions giving power to the centre were the result, but we could not do more to get the provinces under the influence of the centre. Here then is the confession by Rajendra Prasad, who was also the president of the Constituent Assembly, that the provincial politicians had become powerful enough to dictate their terms to the Constituent Assembly, which realized its limitations.

LOCAL SELF-GOVERNMENT IGNORED

My own view is that, in their obsession with the 1935 Act and under the pressure of provincial leaders, the constitution-makers wholly ignored local self-government. Had they from the start given the villages and the districts the kind of panchayats that had ultimately to be conceded to them constitutionally during the Narasimha Rao regime, the history of the country would have been different. It must not be forgotten that even today there are over 5,00,000 villages in the country which were wholly neglected by the Raj. **They continue to be neglected.**

It is only now that the need is felt for not only three lists in the Constitution — Union, State and Concurrent — but a fourth one dealing with the powers and jurisdiction of the two-tier or three-tier panchayats. Unfortunately, just as the political livelihood of thousands of persons was

involved in having a unitary state, the livelihood of lakhs of state politicians would have been affected had power really devolved on the panchayats. But this alone is a sure guarantee of defusing parochial demands. Once the local population gets truly involved in shaping its development and destiny, it will refuse to fall a prey to parochial demands.

The Constitution arguably cries for a second look, but the political parties seem to be in no mood for it. Some of them believe that a new Constituent assembly, which alone can bring in drastic changes in the Constitution, will end up making a greater mess than created by the Constitution as it is.

This being the position, all one can do is to take note of how the Constitution has shaped in practice. As a broad proposition it may be said that, in the first four decades of the coming into force of the Constitution, the centre consolidated its powers in numerous ways, and to the detriment of the states. As noted by the Sarkaria Commission, through its legislative and executive actions the centre has taken over functions that normally were to be left to the states. An example is the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act as a result of which the centre controls a large number of Industries. This has curtailed the powers of the states under Entry 24 of the state lists. The act also brings under central regulation agricultural products such as tea and coffee. The same goes for the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act. This ousts the legislative powers of the state legislatures. There are a hosts of other acts, which would be too tedious to enumerate, which encroach on the state sphere.

Then there is centralized planning through the Planning Commission, created not through an act of Parliament but by executive fiat. For all practical purposes the Planning Commission has cut into the role and functions of the Finance Commission. The misuse of the emergency provisions (and non-use when it really mattered, as for instance in preventing the destruction of the Babri Masjid) has been well covered by the media and needs to be dwelt on no more.

Unfortunately for the centre (and to an extent the country as a whole) in the last decade or so, thanks to the Indian voter coming into his own, and the all-India parties getting weak, divided and disoriented, it is the regional parties which have acquired the upper-hand. If the dominance of the centre was bad for democracy, the dominance of the regional parties even in central affairs poses a positive danger to the centre.

What then is the way out? Since there is no real conflict between regional aspirations and national interest, if our regional leaders develop a national outlook and acquire the status, say of Jyoti Basu, who despite his commitment to communism has developed a national vision, then the country may be considered to be in safe hands.

However, there can be no getting away from the fact that grassroots democracy needs to be strengthened. This implies giving a fair chance to the two-tier or three-tier panchayats to come into their own. This implies

reducing the powers of state leaders and legislators — but then this will have to be attempted. Drastic amendments to the Constitution will also have to be attempted so that there is a fairer division of powers among the panchayats, the states and the centre. This may take time but there is no escape from it, if India is to survive in one piece.

We may take heart from the fact that even though the political parties are in a state of ferment, other institutions such as the Election Commission, the judiciary and the press are acquiring a vibrancy of their own. Above all the Indian voter has come into his own. Not only is he not to be trifled with but he is to be feared, as every vote-seeking politician has realized. Some time before his death, Jayaprakash Narayan told me that he had absolute faith in the Indian voter. He thought it was possible that parliamentary democracy of the Westminster type may not survive. But so what? Another, and perhaps more satisfactory system, would emerge.

So be it.

NOTES

1. The Indian Constitution lists subjects for legislation under three heads — Union, State and Concurrent. The union government alone can legislate in respect of the first, and the state government alone in respect of the second. Both union and state governments can legislate on subjects in the Concurrent list with the proviso that no state law can override an existing union law.
2. The union government set up in 1983 a commission under Justice R.S. Sarkaria of the Supreme Court, to examine all aspects of centre-state relations and suggests changes and norms where it feel necessary. The commission submitted its report in 1988.

P. C. ALEXANDER

Civil Service: Continuity and Change

The administrative framework which India inherited at the time of independence was one which had continued for nearly a century under British rule. The founding fathers of the republic had wisely decided to adopt all the institutions of the parliamentary system of democracy in the United Kingdom which they considered useful for India. The most important among these were an independent judiciary, a free press, legislatures elected on universal adult franchise, an executive responsible and accountable to the legislature and a permanent civil service which was selected on competitive merit and working on the principle of political neutrality and impartiality. Even though the civil service which independent India inherited had been designed to serve the interests of the colonial power, the leaders of the new nation were convinced that with a suitable orientation and re-definition of the role of the civil service the old administrative system could effectively be used to serve the requirements of the *sovereign democratic republic* which was being established.¹

The new role of the civil service was that it should serve the basic objectives laid down in the preamble of the Constitution, namely to secure for all citizens: 'justice, social, economic and political, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, equality of status and opportunity and to promote among them all, fraternity assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation.' Article 38 of the Constitution had proclaimed as a directive principle of state policy that the state 'shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social, economic and political, shall inform all the institutions of national life.'

When the East India Company established its first organized cadre of civil servants in India in 1765, it was with the sole objective of assisting it to collect revenues from the people of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa where the Company had been granted the Diwani or the right to collect revenues by the Mughul emperor. The dual role of the East India Company as trader and ruler continued till 1833 by which time the Company had acquired control over extensive territories all over India. The Company in its new role as ruler recognized the need for establishing a bureaucracy exclusively devoted to administration unburdened by any responsibility for trading operations and started creating one. In 1853, the Company accepted the most distinctive feature of the Covenanted Civil Service of India which became the Indian

Civil Service (C.S. after India came under the direct rule of the British Crown in 1858 — selection through competitive examinations. In the early years the service was open only to university graduates in Britain in the age group of 18-23. The selection of civil servants at a young age on merit, and training them before assigning them to the tasks of administration thus became the recognized principles of the new bureaucracy from the middle of the nineteenth century. Efficiency and honesty were the hallmarks of the service which **everyone was expected to live up to.**

It was an exclusive service of white men when it was first established. In due course Indians came to be admitted to the service, but the role of the civil service remained essentially one of preserving and strengthening British power in India. During the period of the freedom struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, civil servants, particularly those serving in executive positions in the districts, had become the visible symbols of British domination over India and thus an attitude of distrust and confrontation had developed between the people of India and members of the civil service. In the eyes of the common people bureaucrats, including the Indian members of the civil service, were instruments of repressing the peoples' movement and the main pillars of foreign rule. However, the senior leaders of the freedom movement had little doubt about the patriotism of Indian members of the civil service. They understood that when these bureaucrats jailed freedom fighters and tried to suppress the movement, they were only carrying out the law which they were bound to enforce. The national leaders were confident that they could effectively use the administrative machinery which they inherited from the British to achieve the goals of the new republic. Therefore, when independence came, they were willing to extend to civil servants all the safeguards and guarantees necessary for functioning with **impartiality and without fear.**

At the time of framing the Constitution there was a debate on whether the guarantee of permanency of tenure for civil servants should be constitutional or statutory. Sardar Patel, who was Home Minister in Jawaharlal Nehru's cabinet, wrote to Nehru strongly supporting constitutional guarantees for civil servants. In his letter of 27 April 1948 he stated: 'Constitutional guarantees and safeguards are the best medium of protection for these services and are likely to prove more lasting. On the other hand if we leave matters to be regulated by central or by provincial legislature the chances of interference with the services and seriously prejudicing their efficiency on account of the interaction of central and provincial politics are closer.' Sardar Patel's strong views on this subject were eventually reflected in Article 311 of the Constitution which stated that no civil servant shall be dismissed or removed or reduced in rank except after an enquiry in which he has been informed of the charges against him and given a reasonable opportunity of being heard in respect of those charges. With this guarantee civil servants felt assured that they could discharge their duties without fear of oppression or discrimination.

The new civil service for all practical purposes was the continuation of the old one with the difference that it was now to function in a parliamentary system of government, accepting the undoubted primacy of the political executive which in turn was responsible to the people through their elected representatives in the legislature. The change over for civil servants belonging to the old colonial administration, to the new culture of democracy with accountability to elected representatives of the people, was remarkably smooth.

Bureaucrats of the pre-Independence Indian Civil Service occupied almost all senior positions in the administrative hierarchy during the first two and a-half decades of independence. Gradually the old civil servants started fading out through retirement and by the 1970s almost all senior positions in the bureaucracy, both at the centre and the states, had come to be occupied by members of the post-Independence service. Even though the last member of the Indian Civil Service (ICS) retired only in March 1980, the Indian bureaucracy at all senior levels during the last two-and-a-half decades consisted mainly of those recruited after Independence.

HAVE STANDARDS OF EFFICIENCY DECLINED?

A widely held perception in the country about the bureaucracy is that the standards of efficiency have deteriorated seriously since the pre-Independence days. The assumption behind this assessment is that a decline in standards was inevitable because of the vast increase in the numbers recruited every year after independence. But is it correct to assume that increase in the number of recruits to the civil service would necessarily lead to dilution of quality? A fact often forgotten in such an assumption is that recruitment to the all-India civil services is now from a much larger base compared with the base in pre-independence days. It is not that more people are now doing the same work done in the past. The need for larger numbers of recruits arose because of the vast expansion in the activities of the government consequent on it taking on responsibilities for various development programmes.

In the early years of the ICS, candidates who appeared for the selection examinations were mainly the products of British public schools and of half-a-dozen well-known universities of the United Kingdom such as Oxford, Cambridge and London. Most of the Indians selected through the examinations held in Britain were from families which could afford the expenses involved in sending their boys to the United Kingdom for their education and for competing in the selection examinations. Higher education in India was then largely the privilege of the affluent classes and the number of people who could compete in the selection examinations was relatively very small. Compared with the old system of selection from a very limited base, the selection now is through a process in which a very large number of young men and women from all social backgrounds get an equal chance. In spite of a very large base of selection, the numbers ultimately selected are very

and the final list of successful persons is very small. For instance, in the example from the Government examination in 1981, 1000 of the candidates were short-listed.

1.	Number of applicants for the preliminary examination	15,000
2.	Number of candidates who appeared for the preliminary examinations	13,000
3.	Number who qualified for the final examination	1,500
4.	Number selected for the interview	1,456
5.	Number selected for the final examination including the IAS ¹ & IPS ²	705
6.	Number finally selected for the IAS out of the 5 above	80

It will be seen from these figures that only 405 candidates, i.e. 0.84 per cent of the 15,000 who took the preliminary examination made the grade in the final list. Out of these only 80, that is 0.05 per cent of those who took the examination, were selected for the IAS. It is doubtful whether there is a stricter selection for civil services in any other country in the world than the one followed in India now.

It is also important to note in this connection that the candidates who take the examination for the civil service now come from all disciplines of higher education — engineering, technology, management, medicine — besides arts and science. We can find in the final list of the selected candidates some of the best products of the Indian universities including Indian institutes of technology, Indian institutes of management and so on. With this system of very stringent screening and selection, it will be unfair to say that standards of recruitment to the civil services have deteriorated in the post-Independence years.

The question then is whether after recruitment and training standards of efficiency tend to deteriorate. We have to understand correctly the concept of standards of efficiency. If civil servants in the past did not attract public criticism or adverse comment from legislators, this by itself cannot be a criterion for concluding that their standards of performance were higher than those of civil servants today. Here one should take into account the vastly different nature of the responsibilities and the work environment of civil servants now and before Independence. The civil servant in pre-Independence days had the relatively easy tasks of revenue collection and maintenance of law and order. Today civil servants have, in addition, to cope with the whole range of development administration. They have also to acquire knowledge and skills in many areas of work rarely needed under the colonial regime. Negotiations for bilateral trade agreements, participation in discussions in international fora such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization, and so on; responsibilities for export promotion, industrial development, family planning and a variety of other such tasks

which today's civil servants have to perform demand much greater versatility and competence compared with the duties of those in pre-Independence years.

The civil servant today works within the parameters of a full-fledged democracy, which means a vigilant press, an alert public and a watchful legislature, while those in pre-Independence days worked in a relatively protected atmosphere. They were responsible to executives who in most cases were themselves senior civil servants and with whom they shared a common work culture. On the other hand today's civil servants work under politicians who are accountable to the people who elect them.

The civil servant today is really a servant of the people while his predecessors in service represented the authority of the colonial power. The people who were *subjects* of the British rulers of the past are *masters* today and any comparison between the working of civil servants in pre-Independence days and now will not be fair if basic differences in the environment and nature of work are overlooked.

The perception of a deterioration in standards of efficiency in the civil service should also be seen in the context of the widely-held belief in our country that standards in every profession have deteriorated compared to those in the old days. The trend in our country is to decry the standards of all professions today and to think of the old days as something of a 'golden age'. Any discerning observer would know that 'old' was not necessarily 'gold' in all cases. To state this is certainly not to offer an excuse for the decline in standards of efficiency in individual cases; it is only a plea that generalizations about the deterioration in standards are not fair.

BUREAUCRATS AND POLITICIANS

The crucial area where bureaucrats have to face most of the challenges and problems today is their relations with politicians. The most difficult among the problems are those related to decision-making.

In a parliamentary democracy there can be no doubt as to who is the final authority in decision-making; it is always the political executive because he has the mandate of the people through the electoral process to take decisions. This does not mean that every decision has to be taken at the level of the minister. In day-to-day administration a vast range of decisions is taken by bureaucrats without having to seek the approval of ministers. Among the bureaucrats themselves all cases do not move up to the top levels for decisions; many are disposed of by officers at the intermediate levels without the officers at the top having to see them.

There are no hard-and-fast rules about the type of cases which should move up to a secretary for decision or which should move from the bureaucratic level to the minister. There are some well-established practices which serve as guidelines to officers in this matter. In some offices there may also be written orders laying down clearly the levels at which particular decisions

are to be taken. But even where a minister has to exercise a considerable scope for discretion with the bureaucrats. Some bureaucrats who want to play safe may push up every case to the minister for orders. There may also be some ministers who want every case to be put up to them for their orders. Rigid rules about division of responsibilities between bureaucrats and ministers therefore become difficult.

A distinction is often made between policy-making and policy implementation. It is often said that all matters involving policy-making or policy interpretation are the responsibility of ministers and those relating to policy implementation are the responsibility of bureaucrats. But bureaucrats are also very actively involved in the formulation of policies and their interpretation and, therefore, cannot be excluded from such responsibilities. Framing policies in a ministry or department is not an isolated exercise. It often involves inter-ministerial consultations and in most cases approval by the cabinet committee or the full cabinet. A wise minister should be only too glad to get the advice of his experienced bureaucrats in the making of policies or changes in existing policies.

If a line is to be drawn in the responsibilities between the minister and the civil servant, it may be said that all 'important' matters whether they are concerned with policies or administration should have the approval of the minister. Here again difficulties may arise in deciding whether a matter is important enough to justify being put up to the minister for his orders.

A more difficult problem concerns the manner in which orders of the minister are to be obtained in a specific case. Here again a general proposition can be that orders in all important cases should be obtained *in writing* on the file from the minister. However, sometimes decisions even in important matters may have to be taken by a secretary without getting the orders of the minister in writing. There may be situations where it may be possible only to take oral orders from the minister. Sometimes, situations may arise when decisions will have to be taken by the secretary without an opportunity to get even the oral approval of the minister. Such cases should invariably be put up for ex-post-facto approval by the minister. Ultimately bureaucrat-minister relations will depend on the degree of trust between the two rather than on office orders or written guidelines on the subject.

Justice M.C. Chagla in his report (1958) on the enquiry into the Mundhra case had made some important observations about norms that should be followed in the relationship between bureaucrats and ministers in taking decisions. The issue inquired into by Justice Chagla was whether H.M. Patel, principal secretary in the ministry of finance, had acted correctly and with the proper approval of his minister T.T. Krishnamachari when he advised the Life Insurance Corporation to invest in certain companies of H.D. Mundhra, an industrialist from Kanpur. Mundhra was in serious financial troubles and the LIC investments were intended to help him out of his problems. While discussing how the decision in this matter was taken

by H.M. Patel, Justice Chagla agreed that in certain situations secretaries may have to act on their own. He said: 'Administration would become impossible if a secretary had to hold his hands until he received the formal consent or approval of his minister. In day-to-day administration, in cases of emergency, the secretary must take the responsibility and must act in a manner which according to him would ultimately meet with the approval of his minister.' However, Justice Chagla did not accept that the decision in the Mundhra case was one of 'day-to-day administration' or 'emergency'.

The most important verdict of Justice Chagla was that constitutionally the minister was responsible for the actions taken by his secretary. T.T. Krishnamachari maintained in his statement before parliament that he did not know all facts about the deal until the deal was concluded and that H.M. Patel was not following his directions or policy in concluding the deal. Nevertheless he resigned as minister and his resignation was accepted by the prime minister.

Two important principles were established through the report of Justice Chagla in the Mundhra case. First, the minister must 'fully and squarely' accept responsibility for the decisions of the civil servant. Second, the civil servant while taking a decision on his own should act in a manner which according to him would ultimately meet the approval of his minister.

When it is said that the minister has the final responsibility for decision-making in his ministry it does not mean that he can take decisions ignoring the laws and regulations relevant to the subject. If a minister feels strongly that the existing laws or regulations are not consistent with the requirement of good administration as he sees it, he can try to get them changed through the legislature. But so long as a law stands, the minister is bound by it. If a minister proposes to take a decision in violation of the law, it is the duty of the civil servant to advise him about the illegality of his proposed action. No reasonable person would like to violate the law knowing that he is doing so.

Some ministers expect bureaucrats to be 'co-operative' and 'helpful' in preparing notes on files to suit their wishes in particular cases even when such action may not be consistent with rules and regulations. It is here that conflicts often occur between ministers and their civil servants. Civil servants who point out the rules and regulations which may not suit the minister's wishes are often dubbed 'obstructionists' or 'rigid'. Some civil servants are only too willing to please the minister and become pliable instruments in the minister's hands. The only option for an honest bureaucrat in dealing with a minister who has scant respect for rules and regulations is that he should express his views firmly and clearly on the file and submit them to the minister. He should never allow himself to be pushed to do anything violative of law and regulations and be always prepared to face the 'punishment', if any, for taking such a stand.

While ministers have the right to overrule the advice of bureaucrats and insist on their decisions being carried out, certain elected members of the legislature seem to think that they too have the right to demand such

compliance from bureaucrats in cases in which they are interested. Bureaucrats in the districts are sometimes subjected to such pressures from Members of Parliament and Members of the Legislative Assembly from the district. Pressures become intolerable when bureaucrats are asked to bend or break the rules to favour a particular person's interests supported by the legislator. Transfers of subordinate officers in the districts are a subject where some legislators try to apply pressures on bureaucrats. A remedy open to the bureaucrat in these circumstances is to report such pressures to his senior officer, who in turn may be able to get the intervention of the appropriate political authority in favour of the bureaucrat's correct stand.

In a democracy elected representatives of the people have the right to bring to the attention of bureaucrats the grievances of people or the needs of the constituencies they represent. Some officers unfortunately are unduly sensitive to receiving representations from MLAs or MPs and are apt to interpret them as attempts to 'pressure' them. They may claim that the people have the right to approach them directly and therefore there is no need for MLAs and MPs to assume the role of intermediaries. But it is also the democratic right of the people to decide how and through whom they should make representations and bureaucrats should not resent this practice so long as the representatives of the people act in the public interest. However, it would be a healthy practice if legislators take up issues of public interest as far as possible at level of ministers instead of at the level of officers. By and large this has been the tradition at the central government level and this tradition is worth emulating at the state and district levels too.

Another matter which causes strain in the relations between bureaucrats and legislators is the practice of some legislators using the forum of the legislature to criticize the actions of individual civil servants. Legislators are well within their rights to criticize the actions of the minister in the legislature but it is not fair on their part to use the privileged forum of the legislature to criticize individual officers. In a parliamentary democracy the minister is responsible to the legislature for the acts of omission or commission of the officers who work under him and therefore criticism when necessary should be directed at the minister and not the officer. At any rate it is not fair for a legislator to criticize an officer in the legislature when the latter has no opportunity to defend himself in that forum.

DISTURBING TRENDS

Having discussed the role of bureaucrats before and after Independence and some problems which arise in the relations between bureaucrats and political executives, I now proceed to focus attention to a few disturbing trends which have appeared in recent years in the functioning of the bureaucracy.

The basic requirement for the efficient working of the bureaucracy in a democracy is that it should be able to operate in an atmosphere of fairness

and with the constant shortening of the efficient performance of duty will get its proper priority. In India all officers having to worry whether their rights and interests are claims for career advancement may get overlooked or denied. While Article 311 of the Constitution gives the guarantee of permanency of tenure and the assurance of due process of law, this by itself will not be adequate for creating the confidence in him that he will always get justice from the system in matters which affect him most, namely postings, transfers, promotions, and so on. He will be able to perform his duties at optimum levels of efficiency and commitment only when he feels confident that what is his due will never be denied to him because of favouritism shown by the **powers that be to someone else**.

The cases where ministerial interference and favouritism are seen in their worst form are in postings and transfers. Fortunately at the central level the system has retained its credibility fairly well all these years as civil service boards consisting of senior members of the service have been given the right to make recommendations on postings and transfers based on certain recognized principles and procedures. However, in some of the state governments postings and transfers take place with a great deal of arbitrariness, resulting in denial of justice to some and the showing of favouritism to others.

Frequent transfers from one post to another or one place to another cause considerable inconvenience to the officers concerned. The arbitrary exercise of such powers and interference with the decisions of bureaucrats responsible for the transfers of junior officers have become common in many states. Transfers are sometimes made to show the displeasure of the minister concerned against a particular officer. Sometimes an officer gets needlessly inconvenienced because the minister wants to favour someone else. Every state government has certain norms and procedures regarding postings and transfers, such as the number of years an officer should stay on a particular post or the time of year when transfers should take place, but often such norms are violated by political executives.

Some civil servants try to win the favour of their political bosses to get the positions or places of posting they prefer. This has encouraged cronyism and caused considerable demoralization in the ranks of honest bureaucrats. Needless to say, this has led to the erosion of the concept of bureaucratic impartiality and independence. Unfortunately, there is a widespread feeling now among bureaucrats in many states that cultivating political patronage is necessary to survive in the present system.

Mass transfers of officers every time there is a change of government is another trend that has come about in recent years. In these days of frequent changes in the office of the chief minister, such mass transfers of officers which routinely follow changes in government affect the morale of the service and its independent functioning. The obvious implication of these mass transfers is that the chief minister can have trust only in some bureaucrats and he or she expects from bureaucrats not commitment to duty but personal

leader is there to lead. When a few really powerful and qualified, business-like people are placed in the political process in India and people become to think organization and discipline.

There is one political leader who is a good deal exempted by receiving no salary and one minister who is an absolute ministerial post who gets a salary. Of course it is the practice of a system to change the general staff in every six months and to have a new staff system which is a very big job possible. The members of the general staff and a private secretary and personal assistants are not there in the ministerial hierarchy in India. There is one and he is not the minister. But the role of an officer like the secretary or a joint secretary in a ministry is different. They are expected to carry out ministerial requests in the Ministry with loyalty and commitment. A joint secretary or a deputy secretary is required to meet all civil servants impartially, without giving the impression that he is not really interested people know to him. This type of political commitment makes at the very least of fairness and impartiality in the civil service and widens the trust of the public in the bureaucratic system.

The only remedy to the maladies mentioned above is to leave postings and transfers to various boards consisting of senior officers themselves. Of course recommendations regarding postings and transfers of senior officers have to be approved by the Minister or the prime minister, but if these boards function according to well established norms and principles, senior political executives will not be inclined to deal or with their recommendations.

SUPERFLUOUS LEVELS

Almost all committees or commissions which have gone into the problems of administrative reforms in post-Independence years have emphasized the need for eliminating superfluous levels in the bureaucratic hierarchy. However, far from abolishing such levels in the hierarchy, the trend appears to be for perpetuating existing levels and adding new ones. Today there is a Director between the Deputy Secretary and the Joint Secretary, an Additional Secretary between the Joint Secretary and Secretary, and a Special Secretary between Additional Secretary and Secretary. Then there is a convenient designation of 'OSD' or Officer on Special Duty which can be fitted into any level depending upon who is to be appointed. Some of these posts are created merely to ensure avenues of promotion for officers without any relevance to work efficiency. 'Level jumping' has often been suggested to ensure the speedy movement of files but this is more talked about than practised. Files in the secretariat continue to travel through every level in the hierarchy, causing unnecessary delay and adding little to efficiency. The remedy is not 'level jumping' but 'level abolition'. If avenues of promotion to higher steps in the pay scale are to be provided for, it should be done without creating new levels of authority in the hierarchy.

Inter-departmental or inter-ministerial consultations on files and through meetings have become the routine practice in government secretariats these days. Often officers refer files to other ministries in order to dilute responsibility in decision-making. They try to involve as many persons and departments as possible in decision-making as an insurance against possible criticism from future parliamentary committees or audit. Seeking the concurrence of the finance department in every case is still a must in spite of considerable devolution of financial powers to the ministries. Routine reference to the Planning Commission has also become a regular part of decision-making. Again, even the much advertised 'single window clearance system' has often turned out to be something different from what it was intended to be. 'Sub-windows' seem to be sprouting fast in 'single windows', thus perpetuating the dilatory procedures of the past.

While promotions to senior posts in the central government are done on the basis of seniority-cum-merit, it has become a regular practice in the state to base such promotions only on seniority. At the central level the service boards carefully assess the merits of officers based on records of their performance in their confidential reports and prepare panels of officers eligible for promotion. Selection to senior-level posts at the centre is made strictly from the approved panels but at the state level very little importance is given to the confidential reports on performance. Very often an officer found unsuitable for inclusion in the panel of additional secretary at the centre may be appointed as chief secretary in the state. This practice of ignoring merit in promotions to higher level posts in the states affects the efficiency of administration and creates the feeling of complacency among officers that they will get their promotions with seniority irrespective of their performance.

A golden rule for bureaucrats in the past was that they should remain anonymous and restrain their tongues. When one opts to become a member of the civil service, one agrees to be bound by the discipline and code of conduct prescribed for the service. An equally important rule is that an officer should never take credit for himself in speeches or writings for the contributions he would have made for the evolution of a policy or a decision. Nor should he criticize the decisions or policies of the government once they have been announced, whatever might have been the reservations he would have expressed at the time of their formulation.

A reprehensible trend seen of late is for some bureaucrats to assume for themselves the role of 'crusaders' for certain causes. There have been instances when bureaucrats have come out with statements publicly supporting or opposing a particular policy or action of the government or championing causes which they consider to be in the public interest. Some have even participated in protest meetings, processions, and so on, in support of or in condemnation of a cause. It is obvious that the right to free expression guaranteed in the constitution cannot be invoked as defence for indisciplined conduct by a bureaucrat. If a civil servant has very strong views against

certain policies and decisions of the government and feels compelled to express such views, the proper course open to him is to resign from the service and become a social activist and champion the causes close to his heart. Discipline may prove irksome to some bureaucrats, but in the civil service discipline is integral to work. One cannot remain in government service and at the same time flout its discipline.

EROSION OF INTEGRITY

In the earlier part of this paper I had stated that efficiency and integrity are the basic foundations on which the civil service rests and had refuted the charge that there has been a deterioration in standards of efficiency. I wish I could take the same stand about the charge of deterioration in standards of integrity. Unfortunately, some developments in recent years do not justify such a stand. There has been corruption in the bureaucracy in the past, but what is new is that corruption has now crept into the senior levels of the bureaucracy as well. Instances of corruption among senior bureaucrats may be only on a very small scale at present, but what is disturbing is that the trend has already appeared and, whatever may be its scale at present, it has all the potential for destroying the credibility and usefulness of the service.

Till a few years ago absolute integrity in the all-India services was taken for granted and departures from the normal rules of rectitude and integrity were very rare aberrations. Unfortunately, what was very rare is no longer so and one is shocked to find regular reports in the newspapers about the arrests and prosecutions of senior officials like secretaries and even chief secretaries to state governments and heads of departments on charges of bribery, unaccounted wealth, defalcation and so on.

It may be said that the permissive attitude of our society to corruption in general has been the main reason for the spread of this evil even to the top levels of the bureaucracy. While it may be true that our society is becoming increasingly tolerant of corruption, it can never be a defence for corruption among top bureaucrats who enjoy the benefits of high salaries and perquisites which should normally place them above such needs. Greed is the only reason for their turning to corruption and whatever may be the fall in standards of integrity in other professions, there can be no justification whatsoever for such deterioration in the ranks of top civil servants who are expected to function as watchdogs of integrity in the bureaucracy.

I am of the view that our indulgent attitude to what is called 'petty corruption' in the lower levels of the administration has been one of the important causes for the emergence of the phenomenon of corruption at top levels. Our society has been very tolerant of corruption among lower-level employees and had even termed them as *mamool* or payments traditionally due to them. It is here that we have made the fundamental mistake. If we tolerate petty corruption at lower levels, we will eventually have to reckon

with big corruption at top levels and this is what has actually happened now. A bribe is a bribe whether it is of a petty amount or taken by a petty officer. The fight against corruption in the bureaucracy has to cover all acts of corruption at all levels without trying to condone so-called petty corruption by lower-level employees. Perhaps most of them indulge in petty corruption only because they have no opportunities for big corruption in their present jobs. Another important reason for the wide prevalence of corruption in our country is the ease with which the corrupt officials can get away without punishment. The complicated nature of laws and procedures are ideally suited to the crooked and the wicked in the system, and this encourages many more to follow the tempting route of corruption.

The most dangerous trend of late has been *joint ventures* between corrupt bureaucrats and corrupt politicians. The combination of corrupt bureaucrats and corrupt politicians has assumed such dangerous proportions in some states that the time-honoured system of checks and counter checks and scrutiny by senior officials, parliamentary committees, audit and so on have been reduced to a farce. Those who have the responsibility for counter-checking are themselves perpetrating frauds which they are expected to prevent.

The whole rationale of an all-India civil service recruited through a competitive selection process and given the highest scales of salary available to any group of government employees is that it should not only be efficient but also clean under all circumstances. The task of keeping the bureaucratic system clean cannot be left to courts and jails; it is essentially the responsibility of bureaucrats themselves. Ultimately the remedy against corruption in bureaucracy lies in the will of the civil servants themselves to remain clean.

NOTES

1. A Constitutional amendment later made it into a 'sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic'.
2. The nomenclature 'Indian Civil Service' was given statutory recognition by the Indian Civil Service Act of 1861.
3. After Independence, the Indian Civil Service (ICS) was redesignated the Indian Administrative Service (IAS). The principles and pattern of recruitment, however, remained basically the same.
4. IPS stands for Indian Police Service, the superior all-India Police Service. The other all-India services include the Indian Foreign Service, Indian Audit and Accounts Service, Indian Revenue Service (Income Tax), Indian Revenue Service (Customs), the Indian Railway Service (Traffic), Indian Railway Accounts Service, Indian Posts and Telegraph Service, Indian Postal Accounts Service, Indian Information Service, and so on.

J.N. DIXIT

Foreign Policy: A Critical Introspection

As India completes fifty years of Independence, it is time to indulge in some historical recall, some critical introspection into our dealings with the world around us, and the nature of our behaviour as an independent and sovereign member of the international community.

Whatever the interpretative differences about India's politico-territorial identity in pre-British times, there can be no fundamental differences on the point that it is the first time in recorded history that the peoples of subcontinental India welded themselves into a nation-state in 1946-7. We are in the process of consolidating this new national identity amidst our intense diversities and tensions of centrifugal aspirations, characterizing different segments of our society. Fifty years may not be a sufficiently long period in a country's life for arriving at a holistic or historical evaluation of the perspectives and policies which characterized different activities related to the governance of its society or state. Nevertheless it is a time long enough to undertake an interim evaluation about the perspectives and policies which I have mentioned.

Gandhiji's experience during the Boer War and his assumption of a leadership role in the Indian National Congress immediately after the end of World War I made him conscious about the possibilities of utilizing India's contributions to the British empire when demanding an appropriate role for India in the British scheme of things. A British Indian delegation being given separate representation in the post-first World War international conference, at Versailles in France, and India being allowed to become a founding member of the 'League of Nations' intensified India's international consciousness and initiated Indian experience in foreign relations. These developments germinated ideas, which, during the period between the first and second World Wars, crystallized into Indian foreign policy orientations.

The embryonic and emerging Indian worldview could be summed up as follows. India being the most important constituent element of the British empire deserved an appropriate Dominion Status and recognized identity in the British imperial system. Secondly, to achieve this status and contribute to the stability and strength of the British empire, India had to be self-governing under its umbrella. Third, India wished to evolve into a modern nation state with modern democratic political institutions. And fourth, India expected to be treated as an equal by other dominions in the British empire, and by extension by other countries which had dealings with other British

dominions. This constituted the moderate initial framework of India's foreign policy till about 1920. If one may assess it in general terms:

EVOLVING TERMS OF REFERENCE

The period between 1920 and 1940 should be considered the time when the fundamental terms of reference for Independent India's foreign policy were formulated. Mahatma Gandhi's influence was the predominant factor in this process. While Gandhian defined the framework for India's foreign policy, Jawaharlal Nehru fashioned its orientations and details. It would be pertinent to recall their conceptual contributions to India's foreign policy.

A commitment to freedom based on truth, to democracy predicated on safeguarding diversity and individual freedom, and to encouraging reason and impulses of peace in international relations were the terms of reference which Mahatma Gandhi provided for India's foreign relations before the country became independent. Certain statements of his are worth quoting to remind ourselves of the abiding norms which the Father of the Nation gave us to navigate through the complexities of international relations. He said: 'I would rather that India perished than that she won freedom at the sacrifice of truth'. He went on to say: 'Democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep. Under democracy individual liberty of opinion and action is jealously guarded.' And finally his assertive desire was that India remain committed to the imperatives of peace. He said: 'I am not pleading for India to practise non-violence because she is weak. I want her to practice non-violence, being conscious of her strength and power. No training in or collection of arms is required for the realization of their strength.'

The major influences on Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister and minister of external affairs of free India in the sphere of foreign relations, were his participation in the country's freedom struggle within the ideological framework of Gandhian thought. The second influence was the Socialist ideology of early-twentieth-century Europe, emphasizing the imperatives of social equality and economic justice in opposition to all forms of oppression and exploitation. Looking back on the last fifty years, the first notable feature in India's foreign policy was the impact of these two influences on its attitudes and stances on, and problems characterizing, the world situation in the immediate aftermath of World War II. The focus of this article is also on India's contribution to world peace in retrospect and prospect. Retrospection is relevant because India's future orientation in dealing with the world around will inevitably have its origin in the accumulated experience of the past fifty years. A retrospective analysis is also relevant as its foreign policy views during British rule were only conceptual and attitudinal. They became operational only after the profound transition that India underwent from being a colony to an independent and sovereign state. India's notions of how the international community should be structured and organized were deeply influenced

ramifications, more importantly, the rationale and the objectives of the movement subserved the fundamental interest of the vast majority of countries in the international community which had emerged from colonial and imperial domination into freedom and liberty. This foreign policy orientation of India and its co-operation with other like-minded countries were a stabilizing factor in the international situation.

FOUR CHRONOLOGICAL PHASES

A brief survey of the changing concerns in Indian foreign policy and Indian interests since Independence would be relevant. It would provide a linear perspective to this analysis. The evolution of India's foreign policy went through four chronological phases until the present. The first phase was from 1946 to 1954, the second from 1954 to 1962, the third from 1962 till the mid-1980s, the fourth from the mid-1980s to date.

During the first phase — 1946 to 1954 — India's foreign policy concerns were, first, to territorially consolidate the Indian polity which was subject to the possibility of some large and important princely states of British India opting to remain independent. This would have fragmented the geographical cohesion of the Indian Republic, still recovering from the trauma of Partition and creation of Pakistan. The somewhat ambiguous role of the departing colonial government in relation to the princely states of Hyderabad, Travancore, Bhopal and Kashmir, imparted this concern to the government of India. Pakistan's intrusion into Kashmir in 1947-8 **compounded Indian apprehensions.**

Secondly, India had to cope with the problems of defining its political and strategic worldview in the conflict between Western allies led by the United States of America and the Socialist and Communist group of nations led by the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). Thirdly, India had to structure relations with two of its most important neighbours, Pakistan and China, one of whom was manifestly hostile (Pakistan); the other was an uncertain quantity (China with its new communist government, which could create an unstable regional environment). Fourth, India, while correctly anticipating the disappearance of colonialism and the emergence of a large number of independent states in Asia and Africa, was also concerned about former colonial powers trying to retain their political influence in these countries for their own strategic and economic interests.

Indian foreign policy responded to these concerns with (i) the adoption of a non-aligned stance on Cold War confrontation, (ii) the assumption of a decisive politico-military posture in consolidating the territorial integrity of India *vis-à-vis* Pakistan and the princely states of India; (iii) the attempting of a measured friendly equation with China (India's compromise on Tibet, and supporting China's admission to the United Nations and the Security Council;) and (iv) a move to unite newly independent countries on matters

of one's own country, is to assume that they are not that kind of people, to take decisions on defence, foreign and defence policies without being influenced by external powers or external pressures to the contrary.

The last years featured as the primary years on the agenda of the Asian Relations Conference of 1947, the Bandung Conference of 1955 and the first non-aligned foreign conference of 1961, in each of which India played a pivotal role. A common theme to these United Nations and a desire to strengthen it was part of this exercise.

Not being victimised by a growing military threat, and beingaverse to the Cold War, India being attracted by the USA against communist countries, India's defence, for military deployment and defence technology acquisition, were static and essentially defensive without any pre-emptive dimensions or implications. The orientation in Indian policies for ensuring its own security was development, inward looking and focussed on national consolidation in all aspects. There was an exception, however, to this self-absorption, that is of India wanting to become the role model for Asian and African countries emerging from colonialism, apartheid, racial discrimination, nuclear and general disarmament on the Palestinian question and so on, which generated doubts about, if not antagonism toward, India in the USA and her Western allies. This in turn resulted in the Western powers not being responsive to Indian requests for heavy industry, defence technology and for a wide variety of defence supplies. From their point of view there was no reason to be co-operative with a non-aligned, temporising India which did not agree with their worldview. US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles gave a cut and dried impulse to India's relations with the West, holding the view that 'those who were not with the West in the Cold War, were against the West', and therefore should be treated accordingly. This posed problems in the immediate post-Independence period. India's economic, political and defence establishments were primarily oriented toward Britain, and as an extension of this inclination toward the United States.

A PERIOD OF VULNERABILITY

These trends set the stage for the next phase in India's foreign and defence policies. From 1954 to 1962, India went through a period of vulnerability culminating in India's military defeat by China in October–November 1962. This was so despite the intriguing conundrum in international politics of India and Jawaharlal Nehru being at the peak of their leadership role in multilateral political developments during this very period, from being Chairman of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission on Korea, to being the catalyst for the Geneva Conference on Indo-China after the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu, to founding the Non-aligned Movement and playing a major role in UN peacekeeping operations in the Middle East and Congo.

What caused the vulnerabilities? The answer to this question will provide the explanation for shifts in India's policies, as well as for the osmosis and failures from which they suffered. India's apprehension regarding Pakistan increased by a quantum dimension when Pakistan signed defence and military co-operation agreements with the US in the mid 1950s. Pakistan's joining the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) accentuated Indian threat perceptions — especially because of Islamabad's claim that its bilateral defence arrangements with the USA, and its membership in the CENTO and SEATO, obliged the West to support it politically and militarily in any confrontation with India. This was the *quid pro quo* which Pakistan claimed for becoming party to the anti-Communist alliance. Add to this India's experience of the western countries' reluctance to render it technological and defence assistance, and its worries took concrete shape. Simultaneously, Sino-Indian relations were coming under strain. From 1954–5 China's increasingly assertive presence in Tibet, eroding the authority of the Dalai Lama, its commencing of road construction in Aksai Chin, which was part of Ladakh in Jammu and Kashmir, its publication of maps of the Indian subcontinent showing parts of India as Chinese territory, and its open questioning of Jawaharlal Nehru's leadership role in Asia (at Bandung), contributed to the evolving estrangement between the two countries.

Other critical developments were: Pakistan continuing its Kashmir claims both at the United Nations and in Kashmir itself on the one hand, and Chinese involvement with secessionist insurgencies in the North Eastern states of India. There were also domestic challenges to the country's security and stability. While food assistance and inputs for the softer sectors of the Indian economy were coming from the Western countries, they continued to resist providing investment and technological inputs into the core sectors of the Indian economy. The most glaring example of this attitude was UK, USA and Germany initially refusing to co-operate with India in setting up steel plants. UK and Germany only came in after the Russians responded positively to Indian requirements in the field. India's efforts at diversifying and modernizing its economy to move out of its essentially agricultural groove suffered because of this.

Ethno-linguistic centrifugal tendencies were emerging in the domestic political situation, as manifest in the demand for linguistic states. New strategic and security compulsions were impinging on Indian politics, requiring new orientations; new responses.

With Nikita Khrushchev replacing Joseph Stalin as the leader of the Eastern Bloc, old Soviet ideological and political prejudices against India disappeared. The creation of the anti-Soviet alliances of CENTO and SEATO, which Pakistan and the South East Asian countries joined, created Soviet strategic interests in South and South East Asia. Mao Zedong's disagreements with Khrushchev and the evolving distance between China and the Soviet Union provided an additional impetus to Russian interest in the South Asian region.

WIDENING GULF

India's involvement with the Non-aligned Movement, its support to Nasser during the Suez Crisis, its silence on the Soviet intervention in Hungary, its firm resistance to Western pressure, exerted bilaterally and through the United Nations to compromise on Kashmir, and its support to the Palestinians and Arabs after the creation of Israel had widened the gulf of mutual suspicions and contradictions in political and security interests between it and the Western democracies. India was therefore in search of new equations, and co-operative relations with other countries which would meet her political and economic interests and her security concerns. A convergence of interests had emerged between the Soviet Bloc countries and India which seized this opportunity. Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to the Soviet Union in the mid-1950s and Khrushchev and Bulganin's joint state visit to India in 1955 laid the foundation of the Indo-Soviet equation which served the vital interests of both countries — an equation which continued uninterrupted for thirty-five years, until November–December 1991.

The co-operation which developed between India, the Soviet Union and the Soviet Union's allies had a clearly defined ideological and political framework. India was not transforming itself into a Communist country. The Soviet Union was agreeable to the relationship based on the concepts of peaceful co-existence and non-alignment. India's motivations were: to strengthen its economic and defence capacities with the assistance of the Soviet Union; to use the leverages of Indo-Soviet friendship and the Soviet Union's superpower status to counter politico-strategic challenges to India's territorial integrity and national consolidation processes. There was also the unarticulated objective of balancing off Pakistan's growing proximity to the USA and China. Sino-Pakistani relations became closer in tandem with Sino-Indian estrangements from 1956–9 onwards. The point to remember is that India turned to the Soviet Union only after Western democratic countries failed to respond to its expectations and requirements.

India opted for the conventional dual-track approach in dealing with internal insurgencies and secessionist movements, that of measured military resistance to insurgent violence, at the same time making overtures for a political dialogue. Ethno-linguistic centrifugal tendencies were neutralized by the reorganization of former British Provinces and integrated Princely States, conforming to linguistic and subcultural identities constituting the Indian polity. While this lowered temperatures and resolved the problem in the short term, the process consolidated sub-regional ethno-linguistic identities which have in them seeds of centrifugal impulses, which can erode the unity of the Indian Republic. The short-term solutions resorted to were unavoidable on all counts.

India managed to cope with various problems related to foreign policy during this period except in one case — the Chinese challenge to its territorial

integrity. Chinese maps incorporating Indian areas into China, and Chou En-lai's exchanges with Nehru had signalled Chinese intentions of rearranging the international frontier between India and China. India rejected the basic Chinese argument that the borders between the two countries as they existed in 1947-9 were artificial, an arbitrary colonial and imperial phenomenon which required alteration taking into account pre-colonial, national, and even socio-cultural jurisdiction and affinities. After making concessions to China on Tibet, India was not prepared for further territorial adjustments affecting the metropolitan territorial extent of the Indian Union. Apart from the macro-level geo-political anxiety to protect the country's territorial integrity, an equally important consideration in taking this stance was sustaining the multi-ethnic, linguistic and religious character of the Indian State. Territorial adjustments with China which might have resulted in the alienation and separation of the population of north-eastern India, was not and cannot be acceptable to India.

LIBERATION OF BANGLADESH

Indira Gandhi's purposive and firm leadership and her Indo-centric worldview galvanized the trends and processes mentioned above. Programmes of national consolidation and defence preparedness were implemented untrammelled by domestic political controversies (like the crisis and split of the ruling party in 1969, the devaluation of the rupee earlier in 1966, the nationalization of banks, and so on), when India was confronted with the fall-out of the East Pakistan crisis. The causes of crisis and the irretrievable alienation of East Pakistanis from what was then West Pakistan, and the establishment of Bangladesh, are well known. The Indo-Pakistan war of 1971 as a constituent phenomenon of Bangladesh's freedom struggle, however, affected Indian policies in the ensuing years. Analyses and books on the 1971 war by Pakistani authors have asserted over the years that the freedom struggle of Bangladeshis was either a pre-planned conspiracy by India or that India took unscrupulous and opportunistic advantage of a domestic political crisis in Pakistan to divide that country. Only a marginal section of Pakistani's decision-making elite accepts that Bangladesh's creation was primarily the result of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's obstinacy in not accepting the electoral verdict of the people of Pakistan at the general elections of November 1970, and the inability or unwillingness of General Yahya Khan's military regime to compel Bhutto to respect it and allow Sheikh Mujibur Rehman to become prime minister.

AN ERA OF POLITICAL REALISM

A broad survey of the shift in emphasis and orientation in India's foreign policy from 1964 to 1984 is relevant at this point. First, Lal Bahadur Shastri, despite his short tenure as prime minister, and then Indira Gandhi, ushered

Indian foreign policy into an era of political realism away from a certain amount of romantic illusions and moral idealism which characterized foreign policy during the Nehru era. This shift in orientation was epitomized by Lal Bahadur Shastri destroying the smug predications on which Pakistan attacked Kashmir in September 1965 — that India would only respond militarily in areas of operation which Pakistan chose in Jammu & Kashmir. Lal Bahadur Shastri ordered the Indian armed forces to attack Pakistan across the entire international border, compelling it to disperse its armed forces away from Kashmir, ultimately resulting in its failure in this second attempt at capturing Jammu & Kashmir.

Indira Gandhi extended the content and dimension of this assertive and realistic Indo-centric orientation in our foreign policy by building up India's technological and defence capacities and sending a clear message to all of India's neighbours that India had no aggressive or hegemonic intentions towards them, and that India's response to any threats to its unity and territorial integrity would be prompt and decisive. The trends in Indian foreign policy of the Indira Gandhi period from 1966 to 1984 (except the Janata Government interregnum of 1977 to 1979) could be summed up on the following lines:

- She (Indira Gandhi) followed a two-track policy to galvanize India's economic development to sustain its security, and consolidate its position in the international community for the above two purposes.
- She expanded co-operation with the Soviet Union and its allies, culminating in the signing of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Co-operation of August 1971.
- She initiated successful policies for augmenting India's capacities in the spheres of space and nuclear technology which have resulted in India's nuclear weapons, as well as the satellite and missile capacities both for technology demonstration and defence purposes. The nuclear explosion at Pokharan in 1974, the first launching of satellites, missiles and rockets for scientific and technological purposes concretized this policy orientation.
- While continuing to oppose military alliances and security arrangements under the umbrella of any superpower, she initiated the doctrine that having bilateral defence supplies and security arrangements to serve specific Indian needs and Indian interests is not against non-alignment. The Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 was a source of support and strength during the East Pakistan crisis, leading to the creation of Bangladesh.
- The conduct of a peaceful nuclear explosion in 1974 was a response to the changed Indian geo-strategic environment resulting from China becoming a nuclear weapons power from 1964 onwards. This was the politico-strategic track which she followed to meet Indian interests.

The second track was to strengthen the non-aligned movement and to support the United Nations becoming an important factor, to stabilize global political and economic arrangements conducive to India's geopolitical and economic interests.

A measure of the extent to which she fine-tuned these orientations in terms of political realism subserving India's national interests can be discerned in her resistance to the attempt by some socialist countries in the Non-aligned Movement to make the latter a formal political ally of the Soviet Union.

LANDMARKS OF DEBACLE

Having recounted these trends, the question arises whether Indian interests could have been served better if our foreign policy stances had been different in dealing with specific issues affecting us from 1947 to 1984. There are six landmarks in India's security debacle, because of foreign policy and security policy stances that India took during this period.

The first was our taking the Kashmir issue to the United Nations while we were three-fourths of the way to neutralizing the Pakistani invasion of Jammu & Kashmir.

The second was our not reacting firmly and decisively enough against Pakistan when Pakistan signed the defence agreement with the US in 1954, and then joined the CENTO.

The third was our not being alert enough to the implications of Chinese attitudes at the Bandung Conference in 1955.

The fourth was our accommodating attitude towards China when it took over Tibet.

The fifth landmark was our not developing nuclear weapons when China became a nuclear power in 1964. It is interesting to recall that the US had urged India to become a nuclear weapons power in the early 1960s, assuring assistance, but we refused.

It is also pertinent to mention that we could have exercised the nuclear weapons option immediately after the Sino-Indian war in 1962 and in 1965 after the Indo-Pakistan war and the Chinese nuclear weaponization a year earlier. We could have followed up on our 1974 underground nuclear explosion.

Getting a little ahead in terms of chronology, the sixth landmark was our not reacting decisively to exercise the nuclear weapons option when there was confirmed information that Pakistan was becoming a nuclear weapons capable power between 1985 and 1997.

It cannot be gainsaid that our inadequate responses to the trends generated by the above events resulted in a number of problems which we still face in terms of nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament, defence-related technologies and in our negotiating postures on arms control and non-proliferation and disarmament issues, at present. There is no need to dilate

on our dilemmas on Jammu & Kashmir which we still face due to our mistaken belief in the objectivity and impartiality of the international community which made us go to the United Nations on the Kashmir issue.

TRENDS AND RESPONSE

Rajiv Gandhi's government perceived the following factors and trends as affecting India's foreign and defence policies:

- (a) The Cold War was disappearing; an US-USSR consensus on international issues would require adjustment by India and other developing countries, whose policies were predicated on the leverage available to them due to the Cold War.
- (b) The Soviet Union's withdrawal from Afghanistan would increase US and Pakistani influence and options for them in the Gulf and West Asian region.
- (c) Pakistan itself would emerge as an assertive and self-assured entity in the South Asian region.
- (d) Changed leadership in the Soviet Union and China would result in a thaw in their attitudes towards each other.
- (e) China would adopt a more practical approach towards India, as indicated by Deng Xiaoping to Indian foreign minister Atal Behari Vajpayee during the latter's visit to China in 1978.
- (f) While older multilateral organizations and arrangements were losing their unity and sense of purpose (like G-77, UNCTAD, the Non-aligned Group), new centripetal forces were at work resulting in regional and sub-regional groupings being formed for technological, economic and commercial co-operation; their objective was the fashioning of durable frameworks for peace and security in their respective regions.
- (g) The potentials of mechanisms of socio-economic management and development, conceived and operated since the Nehru era, had levelled off. Comparative inadequacies of somewhat similar systems in the socialist countries — particularly in the Soviet Union and China — were noted. India had to change gear and reorient its methods of socio-economic management to overcome internal socio-economic stagnation.
- (h) Regardless of the factual situation of India's commitment to principles of non-interference and peaceful co-existence, regional perceptions were attributed to India harbouring hegemonic and regional-power ambitions.
- (i) At the end of the fourth decade after independence, India was facing potent centrifugal pressures in Punjab and the north-eastern states. There was a tangible emerging internal threat to India's internal stability and security, in terms of rising ethnic, linguistic and sub-provincial identities.

- (j) Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear weapons capacities changed the South Asian military balance.
- (k) Apart from Pakistan, India's neighbours like Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka were forging political and defence relationships with the US, China, Israel and other countries, due to their perceptions of India.

Rajiv Gandhi initiated policies of measured response to these challenges and trends. He opened up lines to the US and Western countries, while sustaining requisite levels of relations with the Soviet Union; he commenced a greater diversification of the sources of defence supplies and technologies. Signals were sent to China indicating India's willingness to normalize relations and resume discussions on the boundary issue. He established personal contacts with Zia-ul Haq and Jayawardene, the presidents of Pakistan and Sri Lanka, with whom India's relations were passing through a critical phase. He proposed a new time-bound initiative for nuclear disarmament, arms control and reduction in strategic arms, aimed at their elimination by the first decade of the twenty-first century. He started the liberalization of the Indian economy. He expedited the creation of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), proposed by Bangladesh in 1980, participating in the first summit at Dhaka in December 1985. He was prompt in visiting Pakistan to meet Benezir Bhutto after the restoration of democracy in Pakistan in 1988, and then again in 1989, resulting in the important Indo-Pakistan Agreement not to attack each other's nuclear facilities. He put forward a number of proposals to enhance economic and cultural co-operation and people-to-people contacts between India and Pakistan to build an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence. He assured the Sri Lankan president that India's support to Tamil aspirations was matched by an equal commitment of India to Sri Lanka's unity and territorial integrity. His last significant contribution to safeguarding India's security was his visit to China in December 1988, where the discussions with Deng Xiaoping commenced the important and gradual process of normalization of relations between China and India.

CONTINUING CONCERNS

The continuing concerns of our foreign policy since 1991 are:

- (i) India's territorial integrity remains under threat from Pakistan due to Pakistani claims on Jammu & Kashmir, and from China due to the still unresolved boundary dispute. In the latter case, the threat is not operational, as it was till the late 1980s. It remains, nevertheless, till a Sino-Indian agreement is reached on the subject.
- (ii) Internal centrifugal forces continue to affect India's geo-political unity. There are demands for secession from segments of the population in Jammu & Kashmir and the north-eastern states of India. Incipient

separatist aspirations have been expressed by some groups in Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Orissa and north Bengal on and off since the late 1950s and early 1960s.

- (iii) Adversary relations with Pakistan and China, and military conflicts with these countries have resulted in India having to divert its scarce financial, material and trained manpower resource for defence purposes, thereby reducing Indian capacities to formulate and implement social and economic policies for national consolidation and reconstruction.
- (iv) Foreign countries and foreign think-tanks questioning the practicability of India's survival as a united polity because of religious, ethnic and linguistic diversities in India have been a recurrent refrain which India had to and has to counter in one form or the other.
- (v) Foreign military bases and foreign military presences, including the deployment of strategic and tactical nuclear weapons systems in India's neighbourhood, in the northern reaches of the Indian Ocean and in the Arab and African littoral countries, has been a matter of apprehension. The end of the Cold War has not stopped these force deployment postures, whether it is at Diego Garcia or via seaborne or airborne forces.
- (vi) China's overwhelming nuclear capacity and the presence of nuclear weapons in the Asian and Indian Ocean regions have influenced India's foreign policy planning since 1964.

India has adjusted since 1991 to a rapidly changing international and internal security environment. Constituent factors and elements of these environments at two levels will determine the content of India's foreign policy and the direction which it will take. Detailing these elements is therefore relevant.

First, the objective ground realities. The end of the Cold War and the disintegration of the Soviet Union resulted in transforming the two fundamental predications in India's foreign policy. First, the relevance of non-alignment as manifested in the Non-aligned Movement, since its evolution, required a re-examination. Secondly, the leverage which India had due to its security linkages with the Soviet Union to safeguard its national security and to calibrate its geo-strategic environment for this purpose was lost. Thirdly, the process of globalization and the information revolution have necessitated India having to qualitatively reorient its economic, social and developmental policies, to be in step with the mainstream of international developments in this respect. Fourth, India had to cope with a new agenda of international concerns on which the world powers commenced generating pressures, not taking into account the diversity of individual concerns of developing countries, namely the issues of human rights and environment management. Unilateral social conditionalities stipulated by the world powers governed the processes of developmental co-operation.

Fifth, the Cold War was not replaced by a harmonious world order but by new patterns of competition and incipient impulses for world domination by the advanced countries through expansion of security and economic arrangements dominated by the United States, and by unilaterally stipulated discriminatory regimes on transfer of technologies, international trade, flow of investments control over the biological, mineral and genetic resources of the world, and so on. Sixth, India had to define its position and find its place in the new regional groupings and politico-strategic security arrangement being put in place after the end of the Cold War. Seventh, India had to develop new equations with the emerging power centres of the world like North America, Western Europe, Japan, China, Russia and ASEAN. Eighth, India had to forge relations with newly emergent countries like South Africa, the countries of Central Asia, the former European and Eurasian Republics of the Soviet Union. Ninth, India had to diversify its defence and economic co-operation with various countries in conformity with new power equations emerging in the world in the context of policies of different important countries. Over and above all, India had to cope with comparatively volatile and uncertain political and economic situations in its immediate neighbourhood in South Asia.

There have been three prime ministers of India since Narasimha Rao lost power in the 1996 general elections. Atal Behari Vajpayee in his two innings, Deve Gowda and then I.K. Gujral. None of them has been able to fully come to grips with domestic political forces or foreign policy issues. The much acclaimed Gujral Doctrine related to India's regional South Asian policies has not brought about any tangible results in stabilizing the political atmosphere in South Asia or contributing to meaningful economic, technological or socio-cultural co-operation.

IN THE DOLDRUMS

India's foreign policy is in the doldrums in the fiftieth year of its Independence. We are only dimly conscious of the major foreign policy challenges that we face in the twenty-first century, namely the problems of sustaining our democracy, ensuring distributive justice for the vast majority of our people, of coping with challenges of mass migration, management of environment, calibrated utilization of natural resources and adjusting to rapid technological transformations. We are at present in a position of comparative weakness and deprivation. The levels of national consensus and analytical thought on how we should deal with these challenges is vague. India's masses in general are not interested in foreign policy except on manifestly critical issues. This is natural in a society where economic survival remains an imperative concern. Our capacity to structure a foreign policy which will meet India's interests and requirements depends on our first coping successfully with our problems of existence and identity.

On balance, the failures and achievements of our foreign policy during the first fifty years of our existence can be summed up as follows:

The failures were during the first decade and a half of our independence; our foreign policy was imbued with idealism and an unrealistically positive vision of a world order. This approach resulted in our not serving our national interests on some specific issues. Our going to the UN to neutralize the Pakistani invasion of Kashmir, our acquiescing in China's take-over of Tibet, our gradualistic and then suddenly assertive approach on the evolving boundary dispute with China from 1956 onwards, leading to our military defeat in the 1962 war, confirmed this assessment.

We acquired an influence in world affairs quite disproportionate to our economic, political and military strength because of Nehru's moral stature and international standing. As long as Nehru lived, India's leadership could be sustained. His passing from the scene should have helped us adjust to political realities, making us play a more realistic role in international affairs. What actually happened was that we acquired a mindset from the Nehru legacy which hankered for an international leadership role, regardless of whether the rest of the world was willing to accept India in this role and regardless of whether India had the necessary resources and power to claim it. Our desire to play such a role also became a limitation on us to act decisively in our national interests at times. We also landed ourselves in contradictory predicaments because of our claim that we deal with international issues from a high moral ground and not on the basis of realpolitik. Or actions willy nilly had to be based on realpolitik, whether it was the police action in Hyderabad, the military operations against the Portuguese in Goa, and the contradictory manner in which we reacted to the Soviet invasion of Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968), the British-French invasion of Egypt or the Arab-Israeli wars in 1967 and 1973. The same contradictions were manifest as late as the 1980s and 1990s in relation to US military operations in Libya, Grenada and Panama on the one hand and Kuwait's invasion by Iraq on the other.

There are perfectly acceptable reasons why India acted in the manner in which it did in these cases in terms of its national interests. It was, however, on the defensive because of its reluctance to get down from the artificial moral pedestal which it had built for itself. An example of foreign reactions to this predicament of ours was a conversation which I had with one of the seniormost state department officials on the USA's unfair criticism of India's human rights record, when I was foreign secretary. This US official neutralized my assertive questioning of US judgements by saying: 'India faces this problem because India has itself defined high moral standards about its socio-political behaviour on issues of international concern like human rights. We are only judging you by the standards which you claim for yourselves. You do not see us as critical about countries like China, Egypt or Indonesia because they do not preach to us from the moral high ground which you do.'

Another self-created short-coming (not shared in our foreign policy mindset) is the desire to get good conduct certification from other countries about ourselves, namely that we are a great country that we deserve to be leaders of developing countries, that because of our virtues we must automatically become a permanent member of the UN Security Council, that the other countries should look up to us as an important regional power and if possible, global entity. This narcissism results in unrealistic, ambitious, hypothetical praisurilities and petulant frustrations in our foreign policy. This mindset can and should be assiduously avoided.

As one was wallowing in this critical introspection of India's foreign policy, India conducted five nuclear tests, three on 11 May and two on 13 May 1998. These included a thermonuclear test. This radical and activist decision to assert India's strategic position and technological and military capacities has electrified the country and made the entire international community commence a fundamental revaluation of India's position in international affairs. We have introduced an assertive dynamics in our foreign policy, towards the end of the fiftieth year of our Independence. The implications and rationale of these developments merit an examination before coming to conclusions about the successes or failures of our foreign policy in the last fifty years.

By these tests India has affirmed to itself and confirmed to the world its status as a full fledged nuclear weapons state. Second, these tests confirm the sophisticated level of Indian technological capabilities in the spheres of high energy physics and nuclear engineering, with capacities for computer simulation and sub-critical tests in future. Third, India has acquired a strategic position as a balancing factor both in regional and international power equations. Fourth, regardless of the insistence of the five nuclear weapons powers, objective terms of reference for future arms control and disarmament processes stand changed with the principle of discriminatory restrictions facing a question mark.

International reactions to this radical politico-strategic initiative taken by India are still coming in. Most of them are overwhelmingly negative. India's most important concern in this post-nuclear testing phase of its foreign relations is to convince the international community that the overt declaration of its nuclear weapons capacity and confirmation of this by operational experiments is only to meet India's security requirements; and that this capacity will be managed with restraint and responsibility, posing **no threat to peace and stability**.

A number of questions have been raised over the last week about the Government of India's decision to go nuclear in terms of its defence capacities. They need answers. The first question asked is: why did India end the ambiguity and carry out these tests? The answer lies in the security environment around India stretching from Diego Garcia in the West in an encircling arc right upto Pakistan, the Gulf and the Straits of Hormuz. The

former. Supporters of a number of countries are present in the same region and use it to their advantage. Therefore the demand for nuclear and missile capabilities against India must also come. Following's evidence were either reliable or highly questionable. China and U.S. is a China which cannot be ignored by India. This does not mean that the India is immune against its capabilities and need to make the Indian public properly aware of these capabilities in order to support its own policy of non-alignment.

The second question arises about the timing of decisions. There are two reasons for this timing. First, there were some questions for technological and equipment reasons, the second being to lay the foundation of a dependable Indian economic capability against potential threats. India had already achieved this position, which had helped its security. Second, there was a need to bring out of the constraints of political and diplomatic considerations which might have hampered acquisition under the C.TBT for the next few years and which would have been further compounded by the United Nations Council. Finally, timing up the discussion in the Conference on Disarmament.

The third question which is about the legitimacy of a non-proliferation government taking such a bold decision. In terms of seats in Parliament and that of members the Vajpayee government made a winning government, but in terms of voting patterns in the 1996 and 1998 elections there are the little doubts that the BJP's foreign policy and security policy orientation have the general support of the Indian public, and that is so for Deve Gowda and Chandra Shekhar governments. The Vajpayee government is led by the largest single party in the lower house of the Indian Parliament. Both in terms of public reaction to the decision and the orientation of Indian public opinion, the tests seem to have the general endorsement of the people of India.

The fourth question involved is that the government did not consult various parties before taking this decision. Such serious decisions are not preceded by public discussion and political consultations. India Councils did not consult various political parties before the 1974 nuclear test. As far as I recall, such decisions by the five nuclear weapons states in the aftermath of World War II were not preceded by great consultations and transparency. The requirements of political secrecy and technological confidentiality precluded such consultations. More important, India has been engaged in a prolonged, detailed and multifaceted discussion on the nuclear weapons issue over more than two decades. At each stage of the evolution of the Indian attitude there was a general national consensus on what was done. This criticism has more to do with party politics than with principles.

An additional question needing an answer is whether India's economic modernization and development will be affected in an irretrievable manner because of economic sanctions. The assessment in informed government circles as well as among strategic and economic experts is that sanctions will create problems in the short term. But India's basic natural and human

resources and the inherent strength of the Indian economy will withstand the pressure of these sanctions provided India fulfills three requirements: that of remaining politically stable and united, that of engaging in constructive discussion with all the important powers to reassure them about their concerns, and that of continuing with its economic liberalization and reforms purposefully.

One speculation merits clarification and rejection — the speculation that Defence Minister George Fernandes's critical remarks about China were in preparation for these nuclear tests. There is no such link.

A point to be kept in mind is the Indian reaction to external criticism about the tests. New Zealand and Australia withdrawing their high commissioners from India is an exercise in blatant hypocrisy, given that these countries continue relations with nuclear weapons states who have conducted nuclear tests nearer their territories and whose nuclear capabilities provide a security umbrella to these countries. Japan's criticism of India can be understood in the context of it being the only country which has suffered a nuclear weapons attack. But being especially critical of India is contradictory to Japan's attitude toward nuclear weapons powers who have closer relations with it and are also geographically closer to it. The reactions of the United States and the West European democracies are as anticipated. One hopes that in the context of India's willingness to adhere to some of the provisions of the CTBT on the basis of reciprocity, their reactions will become moderate and be tempered by an objective acknowledgement of India's concerns and India's responsible and restrained track record on nuclear matters.

The basic rationale and motivation of India's nuclear testing initiative is that of being alert to its security environment, being responsive to its threat perceptions, and being conscious that there is no substitute for self-reliance to ensure the country's territorial integrity and security.

The following can be considered the successes of India's foreign policy:

1. Despite the enormous diversities and centrifugal forces affecting India, it has remained a united country.
2. It has safeguarded its territorial integrity despite external threats and pressures mounted through subversion, military threats and political challenges.
3. Despite negative perceptions about India amongst its neighbours, howsoever unjustified, it has maintained a working relationship with them in overall terms, whatever the interim ups and downs might have been. In more recent months, it has managed to stabilize its relations even with Pakistan and Bangladesh with whom it has some fundamental disputes to resolve.
4. It has retained its foreign policy, its nuclear, space, and technological options despite continuous negative pressures to fall in line with arrangements which would have been detrimental to its national interests.

5. India has managed to structure a working relationship with all the major powers of the world on a continuous basis over the last fifty years whether it was during the Cold War period or during the enormous transitions occurring after the end of the Cold War.
6. India is an effective and credible member of all the multilateral fora dealing with global issues even if it is not given the role and position **due to it because of power politics.**
7. India has managed its defence and foreign economic relations with sufficient imagination and flexibility to meet its interests and to ensure the security and well-being of its people in a complex world in constant **ferment and change.**
8. That it has achieved all this as a democracy subjected to the contradictory pulls and pressures of a plural society characterized by enormous diversities is a remarkable achievement. If one were to indulge in a comparative evaluation, what India has achieved in foreign policy terms is something which all the countries of Europe are still in the process of achieving after nearly 300 years of experience as nation-states with smaller populations and much greater resources.

At this juncture in our passage past the half century milestone of existence as a Republic, we must be capable of critical introspection about these matters. There can be reason for us to be imbued with hope only if we remain united as a country and do not succumb to the forces of fragmentation and divisiveness. By conducting five nuclear tests in its fiftieth year of Independence, India has taken a decisive initiative to consolidate its political status, enhance its defence capabilities, and raise the level of its technological potential. This decision has redressed India's earlier failure in these regards. At the ideological and policy levels, this decision is an affirmation of India's political realism after fifty years of a chequered strategic experience.

JASJIT SINGH

Defence: A Profile of Five Decades

The greatest challenge at the time of Independence half a century ago was the restructuring of the defence establishment from one organized and structured for imperial defence to one for national defence. At the same time, the defence establishment was also faced with two major emergencies and commitments to meet them: the challenges emerging from the partition of the country and the defence forces, and the first war imposed by Pakistan.

FROM IMPERIAL TO NATIONAL DEFENCE

The defence establishment in India was part of the imperial defence structure of the British empire till the country gained independence. In fact, this was the jewel in the crown of imperial defence. The largest voluntary military force in history was raised from the Indian population in World War II when 2.6 million served on active duty in battlefields across the world. Two consequences emerged. First, the principle guiding British policy was that the defence establishment and military capability in India constituted a key component of the British forces and defence of the imperial interests. Direct threats to the security of India was interpreted only in terms of threats to imperial interests rather than any territorial threat to India. While this was challenged somewhat by the Japanese in World War II, the fundamental assumption remained valid in the overall context. This mindset also seems to have been passed on to the Indian political (and bureaucratic) elites, many of whom believed that there would be no threat to India when it acquired independence. While the Kashmir war did alter these perceptions somewhat, they persisted in the following years to influence defence policy.

The second consequence was that the defence establishment in India was structurally in the nature of a theatre command. The higher defence management and organization, therefore, was geared for the role of a theatre command rather than the defence establishment of an independent state. Political control of the military was exercised from London, although tensions did occur from the Curzon-Kitchener days in terms of civil-military relations at the bureaucratic level. The result, of which the effects continue till now, was that the military was keen to preserve its isolation from the state and society as long as it was left to run the professional side of military functions. This suited the civil bureaucracy and political leadership. Thus a common interest grew in

institutions and personnel to ensure the delivery of the defence policy of the new government was agreed. The defence policy and the conduct of defence policy.

To the end of the British paramountcy and the consequent pre-eminence of the fundamental objective to ensure a sovereign independent state with unity and smooth functioning. The process of transfer of power was followed under the provisions of the partition. The three branches of the military—the army, navy and the air force—were separated into independent forces with their own heads equal in authority. Although the precedence of the army as the senior service continued. But gradually the process of change was never taken to its logical conclusion. For example, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru committed himself to Pakistan in the following steps of integration of the higher defence establishments. On the other hand, the institutions established in the early years of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet and the Defence Minister's Committee became redundant even before the 1965 war.

Partition, Consolidation and War

The partition of the country imposed two concurrent challenges on the military. One emanated from the need for assisting civil authority in maintaining law and order, which came under tremendous stress due to administrative disruption caused by partition, communal riots of a horrendous nature, and transfers of population on a phenomenal scale. The second challenge emerged from the defence forces being busy at one level with the partition of the military forces, records and assets, and at another, trying to organize themselves in the management of defence forces which had essentially been carried out by British officers. The nature of problems may be gauged from the fact that all but one permanent base and all the training establishments of the Indian air force were located in territory that became Pakistan. For the latter task, some British officers were retained. But young officers had to assume responsibilities far above their age, rank, experience or even training. The fact that they achieved the success they did in all the sectors of diverse responsibilities is a tribute to the quality of leadership within the defence forces, as much as to the faith reposed in them by the people of the country.

It was in the midst of these multiple challenges of reorganization of the defence forces, division of military forces and assets, and law and order problems that the defence forces were called upon to deal with the aggression launched by Pakistan in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.¹ In many ways, the responses to this conflict established defence policy and its challenges for a long time to come.

The war arose from the fact that Pakistan sought to incorporate the state of Jammu and Kashmir through the use of force.* The constitutional and

* The arrangements of the transfer of power by the British required that the areas of the subcontinent ruled directly by the British were to be divided into India and Pakistan while the 564 princely states would be released from the treaty obligations and British paramountcy would lapse. The states were advised to accede to either India or Pakistan while taking

political case in terms of international law and practice was strongly in India's favour in terms of the state's accession to India. India, therefore, while rushing forces to defend the state after it acceded to India, also sought peaceful resolution of the situation. An appeal to the UN under Chapter VI (rather than Chapter VII) clearly indicated the bias for peaceful resolution. The UN, instead of resolving the issues on the basis of the rule of law, complicated the situation under the influence of US and British perception of their geo-strategic interests. India exercised great restraint in the 14-month war and contained fighting to within the boundaries of the state, although the state having become an integral part of the country after its formal accession, its western border constitutes the international border between India and Pakistan. At the same time, no attempt was made to drive away Pakistani forces from their concentrations in Jammu and Kashmir by posing a counter challenge on the Punjab border. On the other hand, the available armoured regiments located in Punjab were withdrawn to Meerut, east of the river Jamuna, thus conveying to Pakistan that India would not use its superior military power to thwart Pakistan's military aggression. These steps of restraint and conflict containment were later to lead to the misperception among Pakistani leadership that India would not fight for its rights.

ROOTS OF DEFENCE POLICY

The rationale for the creation and sustenance of military power is based on the precept that it must serve a political role and achieve political objectives. Seen in its correct perspective, defence policy, thus, must be guided by the broader political philosophy governing the role and use of military power. A national strategic doctrine, therefore, is a key element in guiding and understanding the creation and utilization of military capabilities.

In the case of India, there is no publicly available document laying down its defence doctrine. In fact, this has been the subject of a continuing debate in the country for many years now. Parliament's Estimates Committee had strongly criticized the government for the absence of a clearly articulated defence doctrine.² But the reality also must be recognized: the country has managed its defence and military affairs well during the past half a century. There is a large volume of literature, including formal statements by the government and the political leadership over the years, that provides an indication of the approach to the practice of defence strategies. More recently, a former minister of defence outlined the philosophy of India's defence, describing it as defensive defence.³ In order to understand the doctrine and

geography and contiguity into account. There was no requirement for a state to join one or the other newly independent country on the basis of the composition of the population. In fact, the Muslim League and its leader M A. Jinnah had been insisting that the decision of the ruler must be treated as the final yardstick since he was the sovereign ruler after paramountcy lapsed.

strategy of defence adopted by India during the past half a century, it is necessary to examine the roots of strategic priorities and objectives of the country since Independence.

Two characteristics of Indian defence policy stand out. First, civilian supremacy over defence policy and forces has been well established and meticulously followed throughout the last fifty years. This has reinforced the primacy of a political approach to disputes and conflicts over a purely military approach. Secondly, civilian control of the military and the primacy of politics have been strengthened and reinforced by the high level of professionalism and, even more important, the apolitical character of the military in India. These factors have tended to support the political bias in the national defence doctrine as compared to a purely military-power-based national defence doctrine followed in some countries.

The Peace Imperative

India has made tremendous progress from the time it became independent fifty years ago. The country had been de-industrialized during the two centuries before independence. But at the time of independence, it was deficient in food production and remained so for two decades, living what came to be termed a ship-to-mouth existence. Since then, the proportion of people below the poverty line has been reduced from 76 per cent to 18 per cent. Tremendous social and economic changes have taken place. The political system depends upon the will of the people exercised through a democratic electoral process. It is natural, therefore, that the policies of the state reflect social needs and aspirations. The central priority for India has been, and for the foreseeable future is likely to remain, the socio-economic development of its large population. Historical experiences of the past decades clearly point to the conclusion that peace will remain a prerequisite.

India and its political leadership have been emphasizing peace as a key objective of national policy. Peace has been perceived to provide a secure environment, while security may not necessarily lead to peace. Incidentally, this divergence in approach was a matter of tension between the United States and Nehru's India in the early years of Indian independence. The following assessment in one of the enduring and popular textbooks on US diplomacy makes the divergence self-evident: 'The independent government of India, led at the outset by Jawaharlal Nehru as both prime minister and foreign minister, took the *stubborn view* that security came from peace rather than peace from security and that the creation of military blocs against the Soviet Union and its satellites could result only in creation of counterblocs . . .'⁴ (emphasis added).

The Cold War provided the background in which our security and defence had to be planned for the first forty-five years after independence. The policy and strategy of non-alignment provided a powerful instrument for enhancing national security during this period.⁵ At the same time, India's

approach to the use of force and conflict has its roots in its civilizational beliefs. The roots of Indian strategic thinking go back to ancient times. While the concept of force occupied an important position in the political theory of the times, it had to be regulated by the concept of *dharma* (duty), which itself was regulated by many checks and balances. Political theory in ancient India, however, emphasized two aspects of the use and threat of use of force. First, a number of methods other than force were accorded higher priority.⁶ Force was accepted as one of the principal limbs of the State and, therefore, the importance of the power of the armed forces which are maintained to keep peace within and without the State, was recognized.⁷ Manu had described the four political devices at the disposal of the State as (i) conciliation, or diplomacy, or *sama*, (ii) concession or gifts, or *dana*, (iii) sowing dissensions, as *bheda*, and (iv) war or use of force, as *danda*, in that order. The use of force came as the very last option. Even in the use of force, Manu held that there were six expedients which included the threat to resort to force, for example *yana* (mobilization) or *asana* (readiness to attack), instead of resorting to the last alternative involving the actual use of physical force.⁸ These concepts — of the primacy of diplomacy, conciliation and search for options other than the use of force — seem to have started within the nation's subconscious. This is why the philosophy of India's defence relies on defensive-defence strategies.⁹

Defence doctrine and policy, therefore, have been heavily weighted toward defensive philosophy. This has been accompanied by a minimalist approach to the management of defence. Defence policy is rooted in the belief that political relations are the determinants of threats to security, and hence they take precedence over purely military-based security. Often, this approach has resulted in encouraging future aggression. As noted earlier, India unilaterally restricted military operations to the territories of the state of Jammu and Kashmir during 1947–8 even after clear evidence was available of Pakistani military forces being directly engaged in fighting against Indian forces.¹⁰ This apparently led the Pakistani leadership to believe that India would not cross the international border to apply military pressure on Pakistan even in cases where the risk of losing Kashmir was high, and instead would prefer to seek political-diplomatic intervention by external powers. This perception was reinforced after the battle in the Rann of Kutch in April 1965 (which appears to have been a rehearsal for the war that was to follow a few months later). Similar assumptions, incidentally, also appear to have dominated thinking among US military strategists.¹¹

Conflict Prevention

The peace imperative requires all possible efforts to ensure that conflict is prevented before it occurs. This has been the first priority in policy choices rather than the approach to simply search for ways and means of conflict resolution which assumes conflict as almost inevitable. It can be argued that

even the Asian Relations Conference held in March 1947 before formal independence was an attempt to shape co-operative peace for the future among the countries of Asia.

The most important demonstration of the approach to conflict prevention came at the very beginning when India, notwithstanding the military superiority it enjoyed, sought a peaceful resolution of the dispute arising out of Pakistani invasion of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in 1947 and did not allow the extension of the conflict in 1947-8 outside the state boundaries.* Prime Minister Nehru was deeply concerned about the risk that the ongoing conflict posed for the longer-term prospects of good relations with Pakistan. The result was also to stop the military advance short of the western borders of the state, resulting in the physical problem that has continued since then. Another important landmark was the Panchsheel agreement with China in 1954 which not only laid down the framework of relationship between the two countries and committed them to peaceful co-existence, but also bound China to a set of principles for international relations similar to those enshrined in the UN Charter.**

The Tashkent declaration is also relevant in this regard. India-Pakistan relations, dogged by tension and conflict since 1947, are also marked by numerous attempts by both sides to propose and negotiate bilateral agreements on no-war and non-aggression. India's commitment to the 1972 Simla agreement relies heavily on the commitment by both countries not to use force against each other under the terms of the agreement.

Mediation as a tool for constructive peaceful co-existence and conflict prevention/resolution is a central element of this philosophy. The first major attempt in this direction was India's effort, through an appeal under chapter VI of the UN Charter, to get the UN to play a role in settling the conflict in the state of Jammu and Kashmir in late 1947. The next major effort was the role India played during the Korean War. India also sought to defuse the conflict in the Rann of Kutch in April 1965 through mediation by external powers. Commitment to mediation by external powers, however, has declined markedly since the early years. This is essentially due to lack of objectivity and impartiality, so important in mediation, by external powers. But the strong support for the concept of de-escalation and defusing of conflict has continued. This concept has guided India's thinking and provided even a degree of enthusiasm for peace-keeping roles, especially under the UN auspices. India's peace-keeping commitments reached maturity during the 1956 Suez Crisis. It is the same philosophy that has guided the strong commitment to international peace-keeping operations over the years.

* This conflict was officially not categorized as 'war', which would have required designating Pakistan explicitly or implicitly as the 'enemy'.

** The People's Republic of China was not a member of the UN then the seat being occupied by the KMT government in Taiwan.

Conflict Containment

The basic philosophy of defence also led to the country's defence strategy relying on circumscribing and containing a conflict and its effects. This is a logical extension of the approach to prevent and resolve conflicts peacefully. This is not to support any claim that this approach is intrinsically superior or provides a high degree of assurance of success even from the long-term perspective. But what we seek to convey is that this is one of the characteristics of the Indian approach to dealing with disputes and conflicts.

Significantly, the wars that India has been involved in have been some of the most restrained (almost 'civilized') in an otherwise most violent century in human history. No civilian targets were attacked and collateral damage was kept to the barest. An integral component of this concept has been the insulation of local disputes and conflicts from the larger Cold War confrontation and conflictual politics. Non-alignment as a grand strategy for this purpose is well known and documented even if grossly misunderstood in the West.

Similarly, the early termination of war and conflict has been an integral part of this philosophy and strategy. The approach to the UN on 1 January 1948 was aimed at conflict termination at an early date. When Pakistan attacked India on 1 September 1965, it took six days before a counter-attack was launched. More important, a ceasefire was accepted although Indian forces were on the gates of Lahore and Pakistan was left with less than three days' ammunition. In 1962, India did not pursue the war after China unilaterally declared a ceasefire and withdrew (in the eastern sector) to the original positions, although it claimed the territory it had over-run during the war. Similarly, India accepted cease-fire in the western sector in 1971 as soon as the political objectives in Bangladesh were achieved.

Conflict containment also relies heavily on war prevention/avoidance; the use of force is considered as an instrument of last resort in managing disputes, both internal and external. India's non-violent struggle for independence (which inspired many other freedom struggles) is a classic example. The principle of peaceful co-existence in the 1954 Panchsheel agreement and the non-use of force commitment in the 1972 Simla agreement between India and Pakistan are typical examples. The principle has been taken forward in the Indo-Pakistan bilateral agreement not to attack each other's nuclear installations (proposed by India in 1985, signed in 1988, and which came into force in January 1993). India's proposal for agreement on non-attack on population centres and economic targets (put forward in January 1994) follows the same principle to take the existing understanding forward while formalizing the essential historical realities. The 1993 and 1996 agreements with China clearly restrain both sides from using military force against each other. The Indian proposal to Pakistan for not having first-use of nuclear capability falls in the same pattern. India's proposals (at the UN General Assembly) for abjuring first-use of nuclear weapons grows out of the same concept.

War Prevention

War avoidance and prevention have formed a key element in defence strategies and doctrine. The most recent example is that of India and Pakistan, which have avoided a direct war for more than a quarter century in spite of serious tensions and deterioration of relations. More specifically, India consciously pursued a policy of war avoidance in early 1990 when the risk of regular war escalated in December 1989 following the low intensity proxy war launched by Pakistan in Punjab and Jammu & Kashmir states.¹² Similarly, the nuclear restraint and implicit arms control operating in South Asia are an endorsement of the same approach. This does not mean that this approach was always successful. In fact, it can be argued that pursuit of war avoidance and circumscribing conflict even encouraged subsequent aggression (as in 1965) because of perceptions of weakness or timidity by the adversary state. While conflict was delayed or even avoided in most cases, it is also true that often it led to a greater quantum of force having to be used to retrieve the situation, since the use came at a much later stage.

The strategy adopted to deal with the crisis of 1990 shifted the Indian defence doctrine clearly from the traditional strategy of territorial defence to prevention of war. The political philosophy and doctrine has retained its earlier defensive-defence orientation; but it no longer seems to rest on defence of every inch of territory. This shift has been reinforced by the changing nature of war. This approach is in contrast to that of Pakistan for example where the military doctrine has been constructed on the philosophy of offensive-defence as compared with India's philosophy.¹³ In its actual application, Pakistan has not hesitated to be the first to employ the heavy use of force in order to gain an initial advantage.¹⁴ At the same time Pakistan has been advocating a military strategy of war based on instilling terror into the hearts of the enemy, during pre-war, war, and war-termination stages.¹⁵ This signifies (and conveys) a strategic doctrine that rests heavily on the use of terrorism and unconventional conflict, as well as reliance on nuclear weapons for mass destruction, as an instrument of policy. It is interesting to note that when, in 1989, Pakistan was formally announcing the doctrine of offensive defence, the Indian defence minister was formally writing about pursuing one of defensive defence. When General Aslam Beg formally announced the doctrine of offensive-defence, he also linked it to nuclear deterrence for military purposes, and exhorted his senior officers to use terror as a weapon in accordance with the interpretation of the Holy Quran. Pakistan has also placed a great deal of emphasis on guerrilla warfare in its doctrines. Unlike India and the USA, whose doctrine was concerned with suppressing a guerrilla war, the Pakistanis studied it in terms of launching a people's war against India.¹⁶ It is this strategy that was followed by Pakistan in 1947, 1965, and more recently, in 1982 onward in Punjab and 1988 in Jammu &

Kashmir. Unlike the earlier periods, India took significant steps in 1990 to avoid getting sucked into a war.¹⁷

DEFENDING INDIA

It is rather unique that none of the wars that India has been involved in since Independence was initiated by India. * Pakistan launched a war against Jammu and Kashmir, which was then an independent country, and with which Pakistan had a Stand Still Agreement to maintain status quo. Pakistan's army was deeply involved in the planning and conduct of the invasion. The state acceded to India in accordance with the provisions of the arrangements for the transfer of power on 26 October 1947 while the invaders were virtually at the gates of Srinagar. India flew in forces on 27 October 1947 and after holding the invaders, referred the matter to the UN for a peaceful settlement requiring vacation of the aggression by Pakistan. The basic grounds Pakistan seeks to project for its military action ever since then is that Kashmir is a Muslim majority state and hence should be part of Pakistan. This is treated even now as the unfinished agenda of the partition of the sub-continent in 1947. This is not the place to discuss the issues involved in any detail. Suffice to say that under the terms of India's partition, the areas which had been directly ruled by the British were to be divided on the basis of a Muslim majority contiguous region to be constituted as the new state of Pakistan. As regards the territories composed of 564 princely states (of which Jammu and Kashmir was one), with whom Britain had treaty arrangements, the paramountcy conferred on Britain by virtue of these treaties was to lapse along with these treaties on the day India gained independence. The states were advised to accede to India or Pakistan keeping in mind factors of geographic contiguity and so on.

The Muslim League headed by Mohammad Ali Jinnah had insisted that the decision of the ruler should be treated as the final criterion for accepting accession of a state since he/she would be the sovereign ruler of the state concerned. According to this criterion and the provisions of the transfer of power arrangements, the state of Jammu and Kashmir acceded to India and Pakistani aggression against the state became aggression against India. The UN asked for a ceasefire and the resolution (dated 18 August 1948) of the UN Commission for India and Pakistan outlining the terms of ceasefire accepted by both India and Pakistan stipulated that Pakistan was to withdraw its forces and citizens from the state of Jammu and Kashmir. After Pakistan vacated the territory and normalcy was restored (for which purpose India was to retain military forces in the state), a plebiscite was to be held to decide the final accession of the state to Pakistan or India. Pakistan has not vacated the occupied territories even fifty years later.

Pakistan tried to expand the occupied territories in Jammu and Kashmir through similar strategy (irregular war followed by direct invasion) in 1965.²¹

The assumption was that India was demoralized after the 1962 defeat by China and the political leadership changed after Jawaharlal Nehru's death in 1964, also once the Indian military expansion triggered by the China-India war reached the point of consolidation, Pakistan will not be able to take the state by force. The military assumptions included the continuing mythological belief that Indians would not fight and that one Pakistan was equal to ten or twenty Indians. More specifically, the clashes in the Rann of Kutch in April 1965, had reinforced assumptions that India will observe its earlier restraint and not cross the international border in Punjab Region, than even when provoked in Jammu & Kashmir (as had happened in 1947-8), and that the United States would not come down heavily on the use of US supplied weapons in a confrontation with India in spite of commitments given to India by the US. President Ayub was apparently surprised by the Indian counter attack on 6 September 1965. According to Altaf Ghadar, Bhutto had assured Ayub Khan that the Indians would never violate the Indo-Pakistan border.²⁶ The Indian counter attack was not accompanied by air attack, and it was only after the Pakistan air force carried out a pre-emptive attack on 6 September against Indian air bases that the Indian air force retaliated.

The 1971 war arose out of the Pakistani military leadership's refusal to implement the result of what was probably the first genuine election and its resorting to genocide of the population in the country's eastern wing. Pakistan has nurtured the mythology that India dismembered the country. But more recent and serious studies clearly indicate that the causes for the break-up of Pakistan were indigenous, mostly emanating from the failures to evolve balanced (ethnic) minority-majority relations.²⁷ In fact, although the situation in East Pakistan had become grave and over ten million refugees had escaped the genocide into India, it was Pakistan that started the war in the eastern sector.²⁸ An eminent Pakistani civil servant who retired as the cabinet secretary in 1990 also writes that, "The logic of the (military) regime's policies in East Pakistan, and the build up of patriotic fervour against India through the media in West Pakistan had brought the inevitable moment of truth. Yahya knew that East Pakistan was indefensible, and soon military resistance there would collapse. He had to decide whether to let it happen, or invoke the conventional strategy of defending it by opening the western front where, for the time being, Pakistan had some superiority. There was no evidence that the Indians were at the time planning to attack West Pakistan, and the hostilities would have ended with the fall of East Pakistan. But, as Yahya confessed later when confronted with defeat, the army could not have lived down the ignominy of losing East Pakistan without an all-out war with India."²⁹ The decision to attack India on 2 December (later changed to 3 December) in the western sector was taken in consultation with the military commanders. The war finally ended after the Pakistani army surrendered in Dacca and India accepted a ceasefire.²⁸

The China-India war of 1962 was unique in many ways and held out many lessons. This has been the only war that India lost.²⁹ There were many reasons for it. The most important reason was the systemic failure of the higher direction of defence and the assumption that this was a border dispute when in reality it was — and is — a territorial dispute, and hence involves issues of sovereignty. It does not appear that these elements have changed over the decades. It is not as if the dangers from China were not recognized. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru had said in 1959 that,

Ever since the Chinese Revolution, we naturally had to think of what China was likely to be . . . We realized — we knew that amount of history — that a strong China is normally an expansionist China. Throughout history, that has been the case. And we felt that the great push towards industrialization of that country, plus the amazing pace of its population increase, would together create a most dangerous situation. Taken also with the fact of China's somewhat inherent tendency to be expansive when it is strong, we realized the danger to India . . . As the years have gone by, this fact has become more and more apparent and obvious. If any person imagines that we have followed our China policy without realizing the consequences, he is mistaken.³⁰

At the same time, the ground realities were such that it would have taken a couple of years more for adequate preparedness. There were no roads going through the high Himalayas, and years and decades are required for such roads to be built. Although forces had been moved to the defence of the northern border, the force levels of the army and air force had not catered to the tasks now presented by another theatre. There was also limited appreciation among the military leadership of the nature and effect of military operations at high altitudes. Preparations had started in earnest after the Tibetan revolt in 1959. But even with full resources devoted to the build-up, it is unlikely that adequate forces could have been positioned and supported at the border. The belief among many, including the then defence minister, that war with China was most unlikely, tended to cloud perceptions.

But that war is not a model that can be replicated by the Chinese unless India allows its state of preparedness to deteriorate. By a curious coincidence, the one war since independence that we lost is the one where combat air power was not used. In 1962 we had an almost unchallenged ability to dominate the Chinese air force across the skies although we could not have prevented the odd attacks on our cities. But the use of combat air components was not resorted to, although it would have had a significant influence on the course of the ground battle, especially in the eastern sector (where our loss was greater). The Chinese could not have sustained air operations from airfields in Tibet for any meaningful period of time. IAF squadrons had been moved to remnants of World War II airfields in the eastern sector within days of the upheaval in Tibet in 1959. By 1962 these had been well settled

to play a role. But the decision not to use aircraft was dictated by political and psychological considerations since our cities were seen to be vulnerable to bombing by the Chinese. The advice of the US ambassador not to use the air force greatly influenced the decision. But one wonders whether the army, which was facing the onslaught of the Chinese, ever asked for, let alone insisted upon, the support from the air force? Or the ministry of defence, which holds the authority for defence policy, sought to seriously examine the employment of the air force that it had sanctioned for deployment? By all accounts, the higher direction of defence had failed. An unambiguous doctrine for proper employment of air power might have helped balance this failure. But such a clear understanding of air power had not evolved at that time.

DEFENCE SPENDING

The primacy of socio-economic developmental goals had also resulted in a minimalist approach to defence capability. The philosophy of defensive defence also guided the allocation of resources for defence at the minimal levels. India spent an average of 1.6 per cent of GDP on defence during the first fifteen years of its independence. Defence spending at any level higher than this was considered at that time to be an excessive burden on the national economy and, hence, not affordable. Parliamentary debates of the period indicate great unhappiness that even this level was too high and was retarding socio-economic growth. This was, of course, also conditioned by the belief that since India wanted to live in peace, no one else would disturb the peace either. Experience tells us that this level of defence expenditure had left the country grossly unprepared for the war across the Himalayas that was imposed on it in 1962. Parliament and public opinion was extremely critical of the neglect of defence as a consequence of underspending. India's defence spending since 1961–2 is outlined in Appendix 1.

Defence Spending and Economic Growth

Defence spending and economic growth have often been seen as mutually exclusive. For a country like India, where social and economic development has to remain the foremost priority, it is important to study the effect of defence spending on economic growth since independence. If we examine the GDP growth data, we find that by the first half of the 1960s it had increased to an annual average figure of 5.37 as compared to 3.49 per cent in the second half of the 1950s (see Table 1). More significantly, economic growth seems to have been significantly higher in the 1980s, when defence expenditure had reached its highest values since 1963 and serious concerns were being expressed about the negative impact of high defence spending.

But the GDP growth rate dropped to an average of 2.97 per cent during the next five years (1965–9), further dropping to 2.52 per cent in the

TABLE 1. INDIA: GDP GROWTH AND DEFENCE ALLOCATION FOR DEFENCE

Years	Average Growth Rate of GDP (%)	Defence Expenditure (%)	
		GDP	Central Govt Expenditure
1955-9	3.49	2.03	23.50
1960-4	5.37	2.64	25.40
1965-9	2.97	2.96	22.55
1970-4	2.52	2.98	21.51
1975-9	3.86	3.03	19.05
1980-4	6.10	2.98	17.39
1985-9	6.11	3.35	16.02
1990-4	4.82	2.63	14.61
1995-7	6.80	2.32	13.18

Source: *Economic Survey*, Government of India, for different years, Defence Service Estimates, Government of India for various years, and *Asian Strategic Review*, 1996-7, IDSA, New Delhi, 1997.

following five-year period. It may be recalled that three wars (in 1962, 1965, and 1971) and two major skirmishes (Rann of Kutch in 1965 and Nathu La in 1967) marked the period 1962-71. It appears that besides many other factors, the frequency of wars had reduced GDP growth rates. (Interestingly, the GDP growth rates had slumped to 3.65 per cent in 1965-6 and 0.32 per cent in 1972-3 in the wake of two wars, while the growth rate in 1962-3, the year of the Sino-Indian war, was down to 2.12 per cent as compared to the average of 4.99 per cent for the five-year period spanning it.)

The correlation of GDP growth rates and defence spending indicates that increase in defence spending seems to have coincided with higher GDP growth rates. At the same time it is worth noting that defence expenditure as a proportion of central government expenditure has been coming down in successive years, even during the five-year period of 1985-9 when it showed an increase as a proportion of the GDP. The rise in GDP on a more sustained basis after 1975 coincides with the defence component of central government spending dropping below 20 per cent. It could possibly be argued that defence spending in India has had an overall positive impact on economic growth as reflected in the GDP growth rates. This is also the conclusion of a number of expert empirical studies in recent years.³² The economic growth of developing countries has traditionally been strongly influenced by the availability of foreign exchange for development purposes. In the absence of indigenous defence industries to meet the requirements of defence forces, weapons

equivalent to 10 per cent of GDP and to 1.5 per cent of GDP in most countries. Examining the impact of the Indian arms industry, the conclusion is that 'Indian defence expenditure appears to have a substantial impact on growth and investment in spite of the fact that historically they have been a very heavy user of foreign exchange'.³⁵

One of the negative impacts appears in the SIPRI publication that concluded: 'India seems to have acquired military security at the cost of economic security'.³⁶ But the study does not include any statistical data to support the conclusion, and not has any coherent argument been provided in support of the thesis; it seems to have totally ignored the empirical evidence. On the other hand, a recent study on the economic causes and consequences of defence spending in seven countries of the Middle East and South Asia came to the conclusion that 'From 1960-8, India...experienced substantial periods of positive net economic benefits from defence expenditures'.³⁷ The study also found little evidence that

India was forced into a regional arms race (although we did not test for Chinese defence expenditures), and until quite recently Indian defence expenditure has not really grown much faster than the economy as a whole. These factors have allowed India's sizable defence industry sector to benefit from military Keynesianism effects while at the same time remaining below the level consistent with efficient resource absorption. In short, even with three potentially hostile borders and their wavering international partnership, India has managed to provide for its national defence at a cost that does not appear to have markedly impeded its economic progress and may, in fact, have aided the development of the industrial sector.³⁸

SEARCH FOR SELF-RELIANCE

Maximizing self-reliance in defence equipment has formed a key component of defence policy since Independence, which was followed by the formulation of a comprehensive self-reliance strategy.³⁹ Diversification of the sources of equipment was seen as an integral part of it. All equipment was British up to the time. India sought to purchase suitable equipment from the United States, but without success.⁴⁰ The only option was to diversify to European sources, since Soviet equipment was not considered good enough and the services were averse to go in for such equipment. The frontline fighters of the IAF in the early 1950s, therefore, were of French and British origin; the former were purchased outright, while the latter were acquired through a combination of direct purchase and licence manufacture. A coherent and comprehensive programme of self-reliance had been established during the first fifteen years after Independence. The war with China in 1962 derailed the strategy and it does not appear to have fully recovered from the impact.

The rapid expansion necessitated by the opening of the new theatre in

the north and the series of wars and skirmishes that took place during the following decade necessitated urgent operational needs to take priority over long-term projects. The Soviet linkage allowed defence equipment to be progressively purchased on long-term credits with rupee payments. More important, the Soviets agreed to licence manufacture such equipment in India without attaching any political strings. The result was a substantive growth of self-reliance based on licensed manufacture. This built up an extensive capability in production techniques and technology. The two factors combined to relegate the key pillar of self-reliance, indigenous design and development, to the backburner till the early 1980s. The result, for example, has been a thirty year gap between attempts to design an indigenous combat aircraft (the HF-24 Marut in 1950s to the LCA in 1980s). Technology meanwhile has advanced by leaps and bounds.

It is in this context that increased emphasis is being placed on self-reliance. For example, the government declared a ten-year Self-reliance Initiative in 1995 with the goal of increasing the indigenous content from existing 30 per cent to 70 per cent level by the year 2005.

Force Modernization

All military forces require regular and often frequent force modernization because of re-equipment needs due to expiry of the designed life and/or changes in operational viability/redundancy brought about by changes in technology and/or acquisition programmes of potential adversaries. Indian defence has also pursued force modernization, and it would be useful to briefly examine some of the dominant trends. First, force modernization has been characterized by ad-hoc decision making.⁸⁹ However, this judgement must be qualified by recognizing that for a country like India such decisions intrinsically have to have a strong element of ad hocism. Technology, leave alone military technology, is not within the control of planners. The requirements often change because of changes (frequently very rapid) in the quality of weapons and equipment of the potential adversary. The supply of F-16 aircraft by the US to Pakistan in 1981 (as much as the arms supplies of 1950s) altered the technological balance, necessitating an urgent acquisition of suitable equipment by our forces. Similarly, the availability of financial resources has been uncertain, forcing ad-hoc choices.

Secondly, force modernization over the years displays a strong cyclical pattern. This has been due to a number of factors. But the central point is that this reflects the absence both of long-term planning and a degree of sanctity of force modernization plans. The Five Year Defence Plans have suffered from not being finalized at times even by the end of the plan period!⁹⁰ A clear result of the cyclic force modernization has been the absence of any re-equipment for nearly ten years now. A similar phenomenon had taken place in the 1970s, resulting in the telescoping of equipment acquisition programmes in the early 1980s with all its negative implications. Past

modernisation efforts will not be possible because new weapons and equipment could be obtained from the Soviet Union at affordable rates, payable in rupees or long-term interest-free loans. India's policy has to be ready to be available in the coming years.

Self-reliance in Future

If there is a single lesson from the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is that of the importance of self-reliance. This is a key policy issue. Given the changed circumstances, the self-reliance strategy has to change from its closed manufacturing arrangements to joint ventures, in design and development of weapons and systems. The global trend in defence industry in general, and that in former Soviet states in particular, clearly point to opportunities for countries like India to evolve new patterns of self-reliance through collaborative projects involving joint design and development, production, and sales.

Global defence spending has come down by more than one-third since 1988. While many countries have adjusted their reduced budgets with reduction in force levels, most have simply cut back procurement of arms and equipment. As it is, the increasing sophistication, complexities, costs, budgetary deficits and stagnation of developed economies, and drastically falling production runs have been leading the global defence industry into increasing mergers and collaborative programmes since World War II. Compared to forty-two major arms producers in West Europe and North America in 1950, declining through mergers to twenty-one in the early 1980s, the number sharply dropped to eleven last year. US arms manufacturers are already operating at 35 to 45 per cent of their capacity, and more mergers/closures are on the cards. The defence industry has had to lay off hundreds of thousand of workers. These industries will need to collaborate further in future, especially in regions where the basic costs of manpower and infrastructure are much lower.

The Russian as well as the European option will remain an integral component of Indian defence equipment policy to ensure diversification of sources of technology and equipment. As regards accessing US sources, the limitations that have operated for the past fifty years are likely to continue. The major difficulty here lies in the low level of mutual confidence and commonality of strategic vision of the two countries. It would be unrealistic to expect that major defence industrial co-operation will develop rapidly. US laws are still heavily weighted against any such co-operation. The approach will have to be incremental and through careful crafting of the areas and methods of co-operation. For example, initially, there may be greater scope in collaborating on joint production of components and sub-systems, besides training equipment. A promising opportunity was lost in not pursuing the US offer for the Northrop F-5 advanced jet trainer for the air force in the 1980s. The two countries will need to explore the possibilities for future co-operation through the mechanism of the Joint Technical Group set up in 1995, although it does not seem to have made much progress so far.

India will need to build on self-reliance through diversification to a more comprehensive self-reliance strategy through interdependence based on international collaboration. The changed circumstances in the world have thrown up new opportunities for this. What is needed is a long-term strategic approach within which short-term decisions should be situated. Russian vulnerabilities have also offered new opportunities for collaboration in design and development, manufacture, and sales, and this approach needs to be pursued with some vigour and coherence (rather than continue with the earlier pattern of mere licenced production). We have lost precious years already.

NUCLEAR CHALLENGE

No discussion on defence will be complete without examining the nuclear factor. India's policy underwent fundamental changes after a nuclear weapon asymmetry emerged in the early 1960s to impact on national security. This asymmetry has if anything, intensified in recent decades. Our security demands that this adverse asymmetry be redressed at an early date. This can be achieved either by global nuclear disarmament, or by India acquiring nuclear weapons. But the nuclear weapon states have clearly adopted a position of even avoiding a commitment to disarm, leave alone pursuing the conclusion of a treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons as ruled by the World Court in July 1996.

India clearly does not require nuclear weapons to enhance its prestige and status, although nuclear weapons have constituted the currency of international power for half-a-century. India is already one of the leading half-a-dozen centres of power in the world. Our status, in the final analysis, will be governed really by how we deal with challenges and solve our problems rather than the mere possession of nuclear weapons. But in a world where the nuclear weapon states plan to retain their arsenals for an undefined period in future, the risk of nuclear coercion and possible use will require insurance through credible capabilities to respond to possible challenges.

There is no conceivable political goal or situation that would require India to have nuclear weapons to threaten another country first. This is why it has been easy for us to demand a global 'no-first-use' commitment, to unilaterally assure such a posture in 1990 (which requires to be formally articulated), and propose to Pakistan in January 1994 a bilateral agreement for no-first use (of nuclear 'capabilities', since both countries claim that they do not possess weapons). The only contingency in which India would require nuclear weapons is to deter another country from holding out a threat of use or possibly even use of nuclear weapons against India. And this would require minimum deterrence in the worst case, while 'recessed deterrence' should be adequate for all scenarios less adverse than that.

The strategy of recessed deterrence would require a non-deployed arsenal, but where all necessary steps for weaponization and its operationalization have been taken. The key lies in the warhead and the delivery system. By all

accounts India has enough fissile material for weapons purposes. We have the experience of having fabricated a device and successfully tested it in 1994. A thermonuclear weapon only defines the quality of the deterrent. Five tests in May 1998 have demonstrated the technological capability for an advanced arsenal. But what India will need to expedite in future is its ballistic missile programme. Unfortunately, this is also one of the areas where the Western democracies have adopted a policy of undermining India's ability to create defensive capabilities while turning a blind eye to the threat and reality of missile proliferation in India's neighbourhood.

Ballistic Missiles

Ballistic missiles constitute an important component of long-range strike capabilities that air power provides. Such missiles have been deployed in the hundreds in China, Afghanistan, and Iran for many years now (and used by Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan in recent wars). China has been modernizing its missile force and new, more accurate mobile long-range missiles are scheduled to be inducted into service by the end of this decade. If the US goes ahead with its plans for BMD (ballistic missile defence) deployments in Asia, China is likely to respond by further expansion and qualitative improvements of its missile arsenal. Saudi Arabia deployed its Chinese supplied CSS-2 (2700 km range) ballistic missiles in 1988. Pakistan tested its indigenous Hatf-1 and Hatf-2 in 1988-9, and is reportedly working on the longer range Hatf-3. There have been credible reports that Scud missiles and launchers were transferred from Afghanistan to Pakistan after the fall of the Najibullah government in Kabul in 1992. More important, Pakistan itself had confirmed import of ballistic missiles from China; and China confirmed the supply of ballistic missiles to Pakistan as early as 1991.⁴¹ These are believed to be the M-11 class which had originally been advertised by China as 400 kilometre range/800 kilogramme payload accurate ballistic missiles. Western reports indicate that at least 60 such missiles are now in the Pakistani inventory.

Given the existing deployments in the broader region (besides the experience of extensive use in the Afghanistan war 1989), and the reality that over 16,000 surface-to-surface missiles have been fired in wars since 1943, it was almost inevitable that missiles would enter the inventory of military forces in the subcontinent also. The problem with ballistic missiles is that there is no credible defence against them, except through deterrence created with the prospect of retaliation with ballistic missiles. This fundamental reality lies at the root of ballistic missiles being a factor of strategic instability. This basic fact, at times, has been further clouded by focus on missiles as a nuclear weapon delivery system. By their very nature, ballistic missiles are more prone to be used against area targets like population centres. Undoubtedly, there is a necessity and scope for enhancing strategic stability related to ballistic missiles in the region. But China, which has consistently

and the fact that the defence force is not a homogeneous unit with a single strategic mission. At present the various tasks of ground, air, and naval forces have been assigned to separate agencies with separate command and control. India has proposed bilateral agreements with Pakistan and the United Kingdom on military and economic parity. It has also a general defence co-operation programme with the East in which programme it would possibly benefit by widening the window of targeting the north-east aggression. Meanwhile there is hardly any option for India except to build up her own resources for its own defence needs. It is also necessary that limited defence resources available are not frittered away in petty parities between the services and the arm. Military and defence research, manufacture, supply, and logistics must be not controlled by a single agency. Any other approach would be impractical and create distortions in war.

High Level Defence Planning Agency in India: Morning Meetings

As we move into the twenty-first century, our defence planning parameters and processes will need to take into account the factors that impinge on them now as well as the emerging situation. In order to put in place cost-effective solutions, it is necessary to move toward greater integration in the management of defence policy. Many steps can be taken and many models can be drawn up. But it is obvious that no large-scale revolutionary changes are desirable or likely to be acceptable. But the minimum programme will have to include the re-establishment of the defence minister's committee of its equivalent, which fell into disuse by 1962.⁶ This development possibly contributed far more to the debacle in the Himalayas than any single other factor. The role of the formalized working of the Defence Minister's Committee cannot be fulfilled by the institution of the Morning Meetings, which itself seems to have been made redundant over the years, especially when the prime minister mostly head the defence portfolio since he simply has too much on hand to be able to devote the type of attention to future defence planning that is required. The Defence Minister's Committee will need to be serviced by an appropriate strategic planning staff. This should not create any difficulty since the Defence Planning Staff of the Chiefs of Staff Committee has been functioning for more than a decade. Its re-assignment as the staff to the Defence Minister's Committee will be more relevant since the chiefs already have the service headquarters to serve them.

The chiefs of staff in reality carry a dual responsibility, and their headquarters undertake dual tasks. One is the task of operational planning and the execution of operational plans, which fall within the area of responsibility of the chiefs as the commanders-in-chief of their force. The second function is that of force planning for the future, which requires the assessment and allocation of resources. While the first could be undertaken almost autonomously, the second function, that of force planning and modernization, cannot be undertaken by a subordinate service headquarters since it requires

[illegible]

TABLE 1: INDIA: DEFENCE EXPENDITURE STATISTICS (IN BILLIONS OF INDIAN RUPEES)

[illegible]

Year	Def Exp (in Rs.)	GDP, current market prices	Population (mn.)	Defence Forces (in thousands)	Central Govt. Expenditure (% of GDP)	Defex (% of GDP)	Defex (% of GDP)
1980-1	40 9100	1,360.13	689.0	1,104	224.948	3.01	18.19
1981-2	46 5180	1,597.60	704.0	1,104	254.012	2.91	18.31
1982-3	54 0830	1,781.32	720.0	1,120	304.937	3.04	17.74
1983-4	63 0917	2,075.89	736.0	1,250	359.877	3.04	17.53
1984-5	66 6057	2,313.43	752.0	1,380	438.789	2.88	15.18
1985-6	79 8749	2,622.43	768.0	1,515	531.124	3.05	15.94
1986-7	104 7745	2,929.49	784.0	1,492	640.231	3.58	16.37
1987-8	119,6749	3,332.01	800.0	1,502	703.046	3.59	17.02
1988-9	133 4102	3,957.82	817.0	1,362	814.023	3.37	16.39
1989-90	145,0000	4,568.21	807.0	1,260	950.494	3.17	15.26
1990-1	154,2648	5,355.34	843.0	1,200	1,040.730	2.88	14.69
1991-2	163 4704	6,167.99	858.0	1,200	1,127.310	2.65	14.50
1992-3	175,8179	7,059.18	877.0	1,150	1,259.269	2.49	13.96
1993-4	215 000	8,097.66	892.0	1,100	1,457.880	2.65	14.75
1994-5	232 452	9,536.80	910.0	1,100	1,669.984	2.44	13.92
1995-6	268 562	10,985.76	934.0	1,100	1,916.182	2.44	14.01
1996-7	294,984 RE	12,633.62 E	950.0	1,050	2,173.184	2.33	13.58
1997-8	360,000 RE	14,528.69 F	973.0	1,050	2,324.813	2.40	13.90

- * Defence Budget for 1997-8 includes special allocation of Rs 36,200 crore to cover the expenses that are likely to be incurred by the government in case the recommendations of the Fifth Pay Commission are implemented.

Note: Data for 1996-7 and 1997-8 estimates based on the *Economic Survey 1996-7*.

- Sources: 1. Defence Expenditure (Defex) Data of India, *Defence Service Estimates of relevant years*.
 2. *Economic Survey*, Govt. of India of relevant years (latest issue: 1996-7).
 3. *INDIA — A Reference Annual*, Min. of Information and Broadcasting, Govt. of India of relevant years (for GDP figures 1961-84).
 4. *Military Balance* (IIIS, London) various years.
 5. *World Military Expenditure & Arms Transfer* (Arms Control and Disarmament, US Govt. Washington DC), 1968-77, 1978-88, 1991-2 and 1993-4.

NOTES

1. An official account of the conduct of operations is given in S.N. Prasad and Dharm Pal (eds), *History of Operations in Jammu & Kashmir (1947-48)*, History Division, Ministry of Defence Government of India, New Delhi, 1987.

2. In its Nineteenth Report to the Lok Sabha (presented on 20 August 1992) the Estimates Committee... *Expressed dismay* over the fact that suddenly emerging situation like Gulf War of 1990 should have thrown the country's defence planning into disarray, or that the country should have fought four wars and launched armed operations in and at the request of neighbouring countries *without a clearly articulated and integrated defence policy*. (Emphasis added.)
3. K.C. Pant, 'Philosophy of Indian Defence', in Jasjit Singh and V. Vekarić (eds), *Non-provocative Defence: The Search for Equal Security*, Lancer International, New Delhi, 1989.
4. Robert H. Ferrell, *American Diplomacy: A History*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 3rd edition 1975, reprinted by Universal Book Stall, New Delhi, 1986, p. 722.
5. Jasjit Singh, 'Conflict Prevention and Management: The Indian Way', *Asian Strategic Review 1995-96*, IDSA, New Delhi, 1996, pp. 9-26.
6. Ancient Indian literature, e.g. *Sukraniti*, *Arthashastra* and *Manusmṛiti*, all **emphasize this aspect**.
7. *Sukraniti* and other texts.
8. *Manusmṛiti*, quoted in Nagendra Singh, *The Theory of Force and Organisation of Defence in Indian Constitutional History*, Asia Publishing House, New Delhi, 1969, p. 33.
9. K.C. Pant (then defence minister), cited above, note 3.
10. Pakistan had even formally admitted by May 1948 that its military forces were **fighting Indian forces inside the state**.
11. See Sidney F. Giffin, *The Crisis Game: Simulating International Conflict*, Doubleday & Company, New York, 1965, pp. 117-76.
12. For details of the steps taken see 'It's all bluff and bluster', *Economic Times*, 18 May 1993, p. 7 (K. Subrahmanyam's interview with General V.N. Sharma who was the chief of staff of the Indian Army in 1990).
13. K.C. Pant (Defence Minister of India), cited above, note 3. For Pakistan's doctrine, see Stephen P. Cohen, *The Pakistan Army*, Himalayan Books, New Delhi, 1984, and Mushahid Hussain, 'The Strike of a True Believer: Pakistan Tests New Doctrine', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, vol. 12, no. 22, 2 December 1989, pp. 1230-1.
14. Stephen P. Cohen, cited above, note 13, p. 145.
15. Brigadier S.K. Malik, *The Quranic Concept of War*, Wajid Ali's Ltd., Lahore, 1978, pp. 58-9.
16. Cohen, op cit. p. 65.
17. Subrahmanyam, note 12 above.
18. Wars involving India are listed below:
 - (a) *Between Pakistan and India*:
 - 1947-8: Jammu and Kashmir; irregular warfare through tribal invasion escalated into regular war.
 - April 1965; Rann of Kutch; border skirmishes.

- August–September 1965: Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistani ‘Force Gibraltar’ guerrilla operations launched on 1 August escalated into regular war when operation ‘Grand Slam’ launched by Pakistan on 1 September 1965.
- 1971: Civil war in Pakistan, escalated into regular war with India.
- 1984–7: Saltoro Ridge conflict (west of Siachen Glacier).
- 1984–92: Proxy war in Punjab, significant cutback in Pakistani support to militancy in 1989 helped in controlling the conflict.
- 1988–96: Proxy war in Kashmir, started in July 1988, escalated in December 1989.

Between China and India:

- 1962 war across the Himalayas.
 - 1967 border clashes
19. For the Pakistani account of the 1947–8 war, see Major General Akbar Khan, ‘The Kashmir War 1947–48’, and *Defence Journal* (Karachi), September 1983. Also see Major General Shahid Hamid, *Disastrous Twilight*, Leo Cooper, London, 1986, pp. 273–80; and Sher Ali Pataudi, *The Story of Soldiering and Politics in India and Pakistan*, Al Kitab, Lahore, 1983, pp. 117–19.
 20. For an account of the war see S.N. Prasad and Dharm Pal (eds), *History of Operations in Jammu & Kashmir (1947–48)*.
 21. There are a number of published accounts detailing how Pakistan planned and expected to win Jammu & Kashmir. Some of the authoritative ones include Altaf Gauhar, *Ayub Khan: Pakistan’s First Military Ruler*, Oxford University Press, Lahore, 1996, specially pp. 203–32, and former army Commander-in-Chief, General Mohammad Musa, *My Version: India–Pakistan War 1965* Wajid Ali’s, Lahore, 1983. Also see Field Marshal Michael Carver, *War Since 1945*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1980, pp. 223–4.
 22. The creation of myths along these lines is extensively outlined in Brigadier A.R. Siddiqi, *The Military in Pakistan: Image and Reality*, Vanguard Books Ltd. Karachi, 1996.
 23. M. Asghar Khan, *The First Round: Indo-Pakistan War 1965*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1979, p. 18.
 24. *Ibid.*, p. xvi.
 25. Lt Gen Kamal Martinuddin, *Tragedy of Errors: East Pakistan Crisis 1968–71*, Wajid Alis, Lahore, 1994.
 26. Hasan Zaheer, *The Separation of Pakistan: The Rise and Realization of Bengali Muslim Nationalism*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1994, p. 354.
 27. *Ibid.*, p. 360. This is also borne out by the former air chief, Air Marshal M. Asghar Khan citing General Gul Hassan who was the Chief of General Staff of the army at that time. See Mohammad Asghar Khan, *Generals in Politics: Pakistan 1958–82*, Vikas Publishing House, New Delhi, 1983, p. 41.
 28. For the Pakistani account of 1971 war, see Sidiq Salik (later Brigadier), *Witness to Surrender*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, 1977, and Major General Fazal

- Muqueem Khan, *Pakistan's Crisis in Leadership*, National Book Foundation, Islamabad, 1973, among others.
29. Perhaps the best account of the war is by Major General D.K. Palit, *War in the High Himalaya: The Indian Army in Crisis, 1962*, Lancer International, New Delhi, 1991, p. 381.
 30. Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy*, p. 369.
 31. John Kenneth Galbraith, *Ambassador's Journal*, Hamish Hamilton, London, 1969, p. 486.
 32. Y. Lakshmi, 'Defence and Development: An Empirical Study of India', *Strategic Analysis*, February 1986, p. 1139.
 33. Peter Tarhal 'Foreign Exchange Costs of the Indian Military 1950-1972', *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. XIX, no. 3 (1982), pp. 251-60.
 34. Chris Smith, *India's Ad-Hoc Arsenal*, SIPRI, Stockholm, 1994.
 35. Robert Looney and David Winterford, *Economic Causes and Consequences of Defence Expenditures in the Middle East and South Asia*, Westview Press, Boulder, Colorado, 1995, p. 211.
 36. *Ibid.*, p. 84.
 37. Ajay Singh, *India's Quest for Self-reliance in Defence*, a study for the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, New Delhi, September 1997.
 38. Air Chief Marshal P.C. Lal gives an interesting account of his experience in this regard. See P.C. Lal, *My Years with the IAF*, Lancers International, New Delhi, 1986, p. 71.
 39. For a critical even though biased approach see Chris Smith, *India's Ad-Hoc Arsenal*.
 40. The Standing Committee on Defence of Parliament has repeatedly criticized the failure in this regard: see *Sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Defence of the 10th Lok Sabha*, New Delhi.
 41. See Pakistan Prime Minister Moeen Qureshi's statement on 26 August 1993, cited in *The Nation*, 27 August 1993; and Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar's statement to the Senate 26 August 1993, cited in *The Nation*, 27 August 1993, where he stated that 'These missiles were bought keeping in mind Pakistan's security needs' which he went on to justify in relation to missile attacks across the borders from Afghanistan. For an earlier confirmation of Chinese supplies of ballistic missiles to Pakistan, see Chinese ambassador to USA, Zhu Qizhen's address to the National Press Club, Washington DC, Reuters Transcript Report (27 June 1991) cited in John Wilson and Hua Di, 'China's Ballistic Missile Programs', *International Security*, Fall 1992, vol. 17, no. 2, p. 37, where he stated that 'We have sold some conventional weapons to Pakistan, including a tiny amount of short-range tactical missiles . . . the range is only a little more than 200 kilometres.'
 42. Major General Palit, cited above, note 29.

Part II

Economy

ARJUN SENGUPTA

Fifty Years of Development Policy in India

The evolution of India's development policy over the past fifty years is a unique illustration of change with continuity. This vast country has had many problems; their nature has varied from region to region and their effects have been different for different social and economic groups within the population. And all of these have changed with changing times. The specific policies adopted by different governments at both the Centre and the States have also been varied. They have been influenced by the varying strengths of different interest groups, and also by the political dominance of the different levels of leadership. It is easy to get bogged down in the details and lose sight of the very significant element of uniformity in the basic character of these problems of development, and the element of continuity in India's development policy that has centred around a general consensus on the objectives of development. This paper makes an attempt to identify that element of continuity and trace it with a broad brush through all the changes in India's development policy in the last fifty years.

ECONOMIC FREEDOM

The shapers of Independent India, both during the period of our national movement for Independence, and when formulating our national policies after it, always associated political freedom with economic freedom, which went much beyond raising the growth rate of the Gross National Product (GNP). For the nation as a whole, it meant the freedom to follow its own policies without in any way compromising its sovereignty. For the individuals who constituted the nation, it meant gaining control over their destiny. This is how Gandhiji defined his concept of 'Swaraj', which would restore 'the poorest and weakest man' in the country 'to a control over his own life and destiny'. The contemporary equivalent of this concept of 'Swaraj' is 'empowerment' or 'enhancement of capabilities', a concept which is much broader than higher per capita income. The lack of 'Swaraj' meant more than lack of purchasing power or income — it included lack of education and skills, health and nutrition, physical and financial assets, all of which are considered essential requirements for any individual to lead a full life.

There were, however, differences among the shapers of Independent India about the approach to achieving such 'Swaraj'. Jawaharlal Nehru, who led the country during the first three Five Year Plans, put the imprint of his

vision of India's 'Swaraaj' not only on our foreign policy, but also on our process of development. That vision consisted mainly of three elements: (a) modernization of the economy, (b) self reliance, and (c) socialism or more correctly a socialist pattern of society with equity and social justice. Indira Gandhi, who was Prime Minister of India for almost seventeen years, followed the same vision, but adjusted the policies to changes in the objective conditions of the economy. The principal elements of this approach became so deeply rooted in our development process that, even in the brief period for which she was not a leader of the government, there was practically no change in the basic tenets of our policy. When she came back to power in the early 1980s, she set out to reformulate the policies consistent with gradual liberalization without being deflected from the mainstream of the approach to development. Rajiv Gandhi pursued these changes further. The economy moved up to a significantly higher growth path, but the basic problems of our development still remained unsolved.

It was only after 1991, when economic reforms were introduced in the form of a package of programmes that appeared quite different from the previous set of policies, that there was seemingly a break with the past. Not only did the path of development on which the Indian economy set itself appear to be different from the past, but also the approach, and the world-view underlying that approach, seemed to have undergone a significant change. In order to understand whether that change was more apparent than real, and whether or not it could be sustained, one would have to first appreciate the rationale of the previous approach, its dynamics and its limitations. If the rationale of the previous approach cannot be changed because it is too deeply rooted in our history and democracy, then both the success and the sustenance of these reforms will hinge upon overcoming the limitations.

NEHRUVIAN MODERNIZATION

By modernization of the Indian economy, Jawaharlal Nehru essentially meant 'industrialization'. In a sense, this was the crucial difference between Nehru's approach to Indian development and the approach of the other major leaders of our national movement. None of them, however, differentiated the approaches in very clear terms. Those who wanted agriculture and rural development to be given the first priority in our development policy also recognized the importance of industrialization. Similarly those who, like Nehru, regarded industrialization as the basis of our development policy would often quite reasonably argue for policies prioritizing agricultural development. However, for Nehru and his associates industrialization was a conduit of technology and the scientific spirit, and thus played the same role as industrialization had played in the Western economies. Agriculture was associated with the traditional mode of production, and thus was seen as providing little scope for the application of new technology, which demanded sharp changes in

the improvement of production. High-yielding varieties of seeds and related technology and knowledge were transferred to India only towards the end of the 1950s. It is these high-yielding and mechanized varieties of seeds and technology which could be said to have initiated the process of productivity growth, paving the way for the structural transformation of economy and technology. There was no previous widespread belief regarding productivity growth in the Indian context. The policy and theoretical framework of development in India prior to the 1950s was based on the idea of productivity growth in the traditional sector. Most of the attention at that time was directed towards the growth of productivity in the traditional sector, but this emphasis did not prevent productivity growth in the rest of the economy, with traditional methods of cultivation.

Industrialization was also seen as a method of providing employment to new entrants in the labour force, as well as to the vast masses of underemployed, disguised and underemployed. Agriculture was not considered capable of absorbing the surplus labour. In a sense, in a country where 50 per cent of the population depended on agriculture and treated as a parasitic drain with drawal of labour from agriculture to other productive occupation, was viewed as almost equivalent to economic development. Industrialization, on the other hand, was also expected to lead to increased productivity, which would result in increased surplus that could be saved, accumulated and then invested in further capacity expansion. This, in turn, would lead to further increases in productivity and trigger the process of a virtuous circle of growth. Agriculture was also recognized as being capable of generating surpluses, but not so much due to increased productivity through new methods of production or technology. It was more due to labour displacement and the surplus released by the disguised employed or underemployed getting productively employed, which would thus generate additional output without necessarily increasing the level of consumption. There was quite a controversy, even in those early days before the green revolution and the introduction of high yielding variety technology, about the scope for increase in productivity in agriculture. There was general agreement, however, that the scope for technological progress was relatively much higher in industry. This was mainly because industry had a larger scope for absorbing physical capital which embodied advanced technology, thereby raising productivity at a much faster rate.

Because of its emphasis on changes in the organization of production as well as on physical capital formation or the application of machinery as conduits of technological change, the Nehruvian concept of industrialization developed two clearly identifiable characteristics. First, it was associated more with large-scale industrialization and the factory production system than with small-scale cottage or village industries. The latter were encouraged more as a complement to large-scale industry — to provide employment to the growing labour force which could not be absorbed in the industrial sector for quite some time. During the transitional phase toward full-blown

and a recognition that small-scale industries would receive national and government subsidies without competition. The distributive policies pursued in the private sector in the 1950s did not square too well with the Nationalist world of the 1930s-1940s. There was no policy attempt to build any wide network of small industries laying in debt to banks and capable of generating employment either standing on their own or working for sub-contract from large-scale industries at home or abroad.

Since the emphasis on machinery and equipment led to a bias in favour of capital goods industries which produced machinery that flooded the latest technology and which were hence capable of raising the productivity of other factors of production, increasing employment was viewed as necessarily dependent on capital deepening, i.e. capital commitment to labour, and the increase in productivity was expected to raise the surplus above the rates required to employ such labour. This surplus could be invested to enhance productivity further in both consumer and capital goods industries but investing more in capital goods industries was expected to accelerate the growth of employment by increasing the supply of capital equipment.

THE MAHALANOBIS MODEL

The case for increasing the rate of physical capital formation and providing higher priority to capital goods production in the industrial sector was supported by the theoretical construct of Mahalanobis two sector model. Mahalanobis argued for an increase in the allocation of investible resources to capital goods industries, or to produce machines in order to accelerate growth of the GDP and, eventually, the growth of consumer goods production. Indeed, the Mahalanobis model rationalized Nehru's approach to industrialization and made it consistent with the requirements of maximizing growth of output as well as employment over time. Whereas Nehru's approach was based on a vision for the development and modernization of the Indian economy, the Mahalanobis model concretized it in terms of policy actions over a period of time.

One advantage of looking at Nehru's approach to development through the Mahalanobis model is that we can arrive at an improved understanding of the interactions between different economic activities over time in response to different economic policies. The writings of Mahalanobis clearly brought out the relationships between different economic variables and their implications for short-term and medium-term policies with the precision of a mathematical model. It is possible to argue that if we had pursued those implications and adjusted our policies suitably, then many of the mistakes that we have made would have been avoided and we would have been more successful in achieving our development objectives.

First, the Mahalanobis model implied a time path of acceleration of growth of consumer goods production and employment where, in the initial

growth, that growth would be lower than in the long run, it would be almost certain that efficiency. However, during the initial growth, it should be sufficient to allow sufficient savings to ultimately ensure growth of employment and economic growth processes, especially if the positive use of wage growth for the labour was sufficiently proposed under Mahalanobis model. Thus a growth in volume of employment goes only as the supply of funds and employment in the initial period and the wage growth which the increase of the supply and demand for labour is required. The supply of funds and employment in employment before the employment would increase gradually in accordance with the increase in demand, especially in private investment in creating new units and industries, for which the increase employment is a small fraction of the increase in total investment in employing the employment before being to employment in the use of the funds and resources during the initial period and not to provide wage growth with those as much as possible that there is a shift from the use of the funds and resources to have the demand employment in the initial period, making a considerable range of those activities would be reduced, they would be detracting from the supply available to another activity, thereby reducing the rate of investment and hence the rate of growth.

Provisions were made in the Second Plan to expand programmes of low capital intensive employment in handicrafts and handlooms in the cottage and rural industries in the rural and urban sectors. But there were not many attempts to organize these activities in a manner that would make them efficient and competitive. Their promotion was linked with providing subsidies and protecting them from competition either from domestic concerns or from abroad. If instead there had been helped with better infrastructure facilities, marketing support and improvement of technology in association with foreign or domestic industries through joint ventures or a subcontracting system, many of these activities may have developed into efficient methods of operation. Indeed, industrial development in the modern period in many parts of the world has demonstrated that technological and operational efficiency is not always dependent on capital intensity or the use of machinery in these activities. If the programmes were **properly** designed and executed, it may have been quite feasible to develop a technologically efficient and competitive labour-intensive industrial sector, economizing in the use of capital equipment, and consistent with the Mahalanobis model. The experience in India was, however, different. These low capital intensive activities remained inefficient and uncompetitive. The way the programmes for the promotion of low capital intensive activities were designed suggests that their **planners** did not view these activities, despite the fact that they were labour intensive and capable of generating large-scale employment, as bearing the possibility of being major instruments of industrialization in India.

The time path of expanding consumer goods production was also similar, supposed to accelerate over time with the increased supply of machinery. In the initial phase, the increased demand for consumer goods with rising incomes as a result of development was expected to be met by the expansion of less capital intensive industries. But if that expansion was not effected efficiently, at a minimum cost, especially with regard to the wage goods component of the consumer goods sector, if their supply fell short of the demand, their prices would rise and thus result in increasing the money wage rate. This would generate inflationary pressures affecting the macroeconomic stability of the system, which, in turn, would affect the rate of investment and the growth of employment as well as output. The Indian experience, again, was one that rarely recorded an efficient expansion of such consumer goods or wage goods production maintaining price stability with improved competitiveness.

In an agricultural economy like India, however, the bulk of wage goods consists of foodgrain and other agriculture-based products. Programmes for industrialization and employment generation could thus be disrupted if the wage goods supply could not be expanded at stable prices. In order to increase the supply of wage goods from agriculture, it would be necessary to increase the productivity of agriculture so that it could provide for the increased consumption requirements of the newly-employed labour. In other words, even for implementing a programme of industrialization following the Mahalanobis approach, it would be necessary to have increased productivity in agriculture. Otherwise, the terms of trade would move against industry, reducing the surplus available in industry to finance increased investment. Besides this supply side dependence of industry on agriculture there was also a demand side interdependence. The industrial products supplied by expanding industrialization must have their demand, which again very substantially must come from the expansion of agriculture, as that is a major source of our national income. It is difficult to conceive of a process of rapid industrialization without, at the same time, ensuring a process of rapid agricultural development. This interdependence between industry and agriculture was not fully recognized in the programmes and allocation of our plans and, until the period when the green revolution demonstrated the possibility of increasing productivity at a rapid rate in agriculture, our agricultural development policies continued to be ad hoc and piecemeal.

THE PRICE MECHANISM

From the beginning of the Second Plan, there was another problem that came to the surface without being resolved. What were the instrumentalities of equilibrating demand with supply as in the case of the interrelationship between industrial demand for agricultural wage goods and raw materials

and agricultural demand for industrial products? Naturally, a market price system was supposed to be equilibrating because agriculture was overwhelmingly in the private sector, and it was difficult for the government or the Planning Commission to coordinate the demand and supply through administered prices. Nevertheless, attempts were made quite frequently to try the route of administered prices, especially when the terms of trade changes upset the relative profitability of the different activities and deflected them from the path of planned development. Foodgrains as essential components of wage goods had been subjected to rationing and administered prices from the onset, which might have been one of the reasons for their slow growth until about the late 1960s. Attempts had also been made to control the prices of cloth and other elements of essential consumption, again from the point of view of controlling the prices of wage goods. There had been only limited success with such policies which, more often than not, either created a thriving black market or thwarted the growth of supplies.

While market prices worked, although in a circumscribed manner in agriculture and wage goods industries, there was a problem inherent to the Mahalanobis approach to planning when applied to a mixed economy. If investments were made primarily according to plan priorities, and machines were produced to make more machines, there would have to be a mechanism to ensure that these machines were actually demanded at the market prices, and that the investments made were actually realized in accordance with their implicit rates of return. In centralized planning systems, attempts have been made to balance this demand and supply in great detail and, more often than not, such attempts have failed. In a mixed economy like India's, where savings are supplied mostly by the private sector, and investments are also made very largely by the private corporate and unincorporated sector, it would have been extremely difficult to match the demands and supplies except through a market-price mechanism. The problem was further complicated by the fact that investment pricing was essentially associated with not just the current but also the future flows of demand, and that in underdeveloped countries in particular, capital markets, even when they existed, remained highly imperfect.

Indian planners were confronted with these problems of mismatch between demand and supply of investment in specific sectors. Attempts were made to estimate the demand for investment in different sectors in terms of projected growth of output, sometimes with quite extensive econometric or input output models. In practice, however, more often than not, rules of thumb were used with wide margins of error with regard to the projected demands. The result was the industrial licensing system. Instead of using the market mechanism, elaborate attempts were made to control investment demand in terms of notional priorities and projection of capacity requirements. As a result, our industrial structure got highly distorted, with inefficiency and rent-seeking activities reducing the rate of growth and distorting the whole process of industrialization.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

This approach to industrialization also gave the planning process in India a very specific orientation. Economic planning in a mixed economy could not have been successful following the methods of centralized planning as practised in the Soviet Union. The public sector has always constituted only a fraction of the total economy. Even if the allocation of resources within the public sector could be fully planned, the implementation of these plans would require that investments were fully financed by domestic and foreign savings, and that the products of these investments were matched with effective demand. This, in turn, would require appropriate policies to influence the private demand and supply of resources. This would, in turn, require operating on and influencing the market system through price signals. As private behaviour is always influenced by market prices, incentives and profitabilities, attempts to affect private behaviour by disregarding market forces could hardly have succeeded, especially when the bulk of economic activities, whether in agriculture, trade or even industry, was carried out in the private sector. Thus, even for implementing the plan in the public sector — for allocating investible resources whose opportunity costs were set by the value of their use in the private sector — it was necessary to have a framework of policy planning using several policy instruments related to prices and incentives, together with attempts to influence the institutional and legal framework of the market mechanism. In other words, from its very inception, economic planning in India should have been more in the nature of planning of policies for realizing medium-term objectives.

Economic planners in India recognized that it was not possible for them to plan the allocation of investible resources for the entire economy as in a centralized planning system. So they concentrated on planning for the public sector, leaving the rest of the economy to follow its own course along a general framework of medium and long-term development. Indian planning thus became essentially planning for investment in the public sector, with quantitative targets based on projected demands. Attempts were made to project the movement of market prices and costs, as those calculations were necessary to determine the cost-benefit ratios of different investment programmes. But these projections of costs and prices were taken more as exogenously given estimates. More often than not, these projections went off the track because they were largely influenced by the behaviour of the private sector, and there was no framework of policy planning to correct them. As a result the public sector plans themselves went off track again and again when the outputs from their activities fell below targets, and the value of realized investment fell short of the intended. Even in the Soviet system, centralized planning failed to work, although most of its economy had operated within the ambit of the public sector. There were many reasons for that. The ones that were closer to the Indian experience were related to the inability of the planning authority

to provide the necessary preconditions for the removal of barriers to free trade, to open up the private sector, and to get more foreign capital. The policy of development and growth in the socialist countries was not identical to that pursued by India. In India, the existence of the public sector was not a condition for the implementation of the policy of development and growth. The removal of barriers to free trade and the opening up of the private sector were added on to the movement of all the countries of the world and therefore, in the case of India, it was the centralised planning of the public sector in the Indian economy which there fore made planning better than even the theory of free

SELF-RELIANCE

The second element of Jawaharlal Nehru's approach to development policy, related to the foreign aid, had an underlying implication for India's development. In some form or other, economic assistance from India have subscribed to this principle, though not always fully agreeing with all its implications. For Nehru, self-reliance in the field of economic was an extension of his foreign policy of non-alignment, which in turn, was an extension of India's freedom movement for independence. It stood for the economy's economic independence from foreign capital. However, this concept of independence did not necessarily mean non-acceptance of foreign aid. It was generally accepted that the development of a poor economy with a low rate of savings like India's would substantially benefit from the inflow of foreign savings in the form of foreign capital. What was emphasized, rather, was that the structure of the economy should develop in such a manner that no relationship of dependence would be promoted, the withdrawal of foreign capital, or a reduction in its flows, would not seriously disrupt the functioning of the economy.

In Nehru's days, inflows of foreign capital to developing countries were mostly in the nature of foreign aid or official bilateral and multilateral assistance. Independence from foreign capital essentially meant independence from foreign aid. Policies for self-reliance were to be so designed that, even if the requirements for external assistance could not be completely eliminated immediately, there should be a deliberate attempt to reduce these requirements to 'zero' within a short period of time. Foreign aid was viewed mainly as a policy instrument used by the industrial countries to extend their political influence and dominance. Although some external assistance was motivated by benevolence, and genuinely intended to promote development in the recipient countries, the industrial countries used more often than not foreign aid for purely political purposes. In the 1950s and 1960s, with the proliferation of military alliances and the concentration of aid to the allied countries, there was a legitimate fear on the part of the recipient countries of external intervention in their domestic policies. Even financial assistance from international agencies, with their policy conditionalities and their often blatant advocacy of the promotion of the private sector and withdrawal of the public

sectors were seen as instruments of interference. For Nehru, India's freedom to choose its own path of development, and to associate with or dissociate from any of the countries of power, was non-negotiable. He was leading the nation on the basis of this principle, and he would not compromise economic policy that compromised with that principle. Even after Nehru, the appeal of this assertion of national independence in development grew so deep-rooted that the policy of self-reliance remained central to our **development planning**.

Private flows in those years were limited in scope and in volume and were mostly channelled through multinational corporations (MNCs). Their significance was not very large in India as only a few MNCs were operating in the country, and that too mostly by capitalizing their retained earnings. They did not, therefore, create the complications associated with inflows of foreign exchange, which could constrain a country's freedom to pursue monetary and fiscal policies. However, the experience of other developing countries, particularly in Latin America, created a bias against the MNCs which, through their transfer pricing and oligopolistic practices, adversely affected these countries' economic as well as political development. The case for a policy of self-reliance was only strengthened by that experience.

In the changed environment of the world economy of the 1980s and 1990s, private flows came to dominate international capital movements. Some developing countries were recipients of large inflows of private capital, whose impact on money supplies and exchange rate movements, and the risks associated with their possible sudden withdrawal, greatly reduced the manoeuvrability of these countries' economic policies and their ability to pursue independent paths of development. This policy of self-reliance would thus enjoy renewed appeal, as also the case for having the freedom to pursue independent economic policies in the current context of globalization. But in the 1950s and 1960s in India, the policy of self-reliance was more directly aimed at political independence, as reliance on foreign capital was viewed as compromising the country's ability to assert its sovereignty in international transactions. During Nehru's time, the alleged pressure from the United States against the expansion of the steel industry under the public sector was considered a glaring example of the effect of dependence on foreign aid even when the recipient country was not part of a military alliance. In Indira Gandhi's time, an equally glaring example of such a blatant use of foreign aid to influence domestic policy was President Johnson's refusal to release PL 480 Food Aid after the severe drought of 1965-6 which devastated the Indian economy shortly after the Indo-Pakistan war in 1965.

There were two other points that should be carefully considered in the policy of self-reliance. First, the appeal of self-reliance was immensely popular in the country. It was seen as an expression of India's yearning for independence and providing leadership to other developing countries that were also emerging from years of colonial subjugation. Even if Nehru had not

and invisible earnings and current spending on imports, dividends, interests and other invisibles. A country's current account deficit must be financed by capital inflows. If capital inflows are to be minimized, it is necessary to minimize the current account deficit. But it is not necessary to minimize either exports or imports. In fact, if exports grow at a fast pace, it may be quite possible to increase imports without causing any increase in the current account deficit or a reduction in self-reliance.

The bias toward import substitution in India's economic policy was derived from an empirical presumption that our exports could not be raised significantly in the near future or even in the medium term. This presumption was related to a general belief in export stagnation or export pessimism until India could change the structure of its economy and achieve a substantial expansion in the growth of exportable manufactures or industrial products. In the world of the 1950s and 1960s, most developing countries were faced with such export pessimism because their exportables were either primary products that faced inelastic demand in the world market, or light manufactures that faced numerous protective barriers in the industrial countries. According to policy makers at the time, the only way to break away from such export stagnation was to expand the supply of industrial products of reasonable sophistication with sufficient value addition at internationally competitive prices, which implied rapid industrialization with domestic supply increasing more than domestic demand. In other words, increasing exports was linked to increasing industrialization, which, in turn, was linked to increased expansion of the production capacity of exportables or increasing the rate of investment. As long as exports did not expand at a sufficient rate, a policy of self-reliance minimizing the requirement of capital flows to finance current account deficits implied, therefore, an overall control over imports.

This way of looking at a country's prospects for growth was fully consistent with the Mahalanobis model, which was the basis of the Indian growth strategy. Mahalanobis' was essentially a closed economy model: there were no exports or there were severe constraints on the growth of exports. This would lead to a strategy of maximizing investment in the capital goods industries and this, it was thought, would maximize the growth of productivity in the economy as a whole. An economy faced with critical problems of export stagnation would behave almost like a closed economy model and, thus, the prescriptions of the Mahalanobis model would be applicable. Expanding the production of investment goods domestically would increase the rate of investment and the production capacity of all sectors of the economy. This should also help us answer the question: Why couldn't we import capital goods instead of producing them at home? Because it would not have been possible to finance those imports when exports were not expected to grow, and when there were limits on inflows of foreign capital consistent with the policy of self-reliance.

It is possible to argue today in retrospect that some of the assumptions underlying interpretations of export stagnation were accepted rather too uncritically. Even if attempts to increase primary exports might have led to a fall in the export prices or a deterioration in the terms of trade, increasing primary exports would not have led to a fall in export earnings or the capacity to import. If export earnings had been used to finance imports of machinery and technology for export industries, it may have been possible to expand the supply of exportables of manufactures in the next round, thereby breaking away from the implications of a strategy based on export stagnation. The protective barriers in the industrial countries on manufacturers' trade may have slowed down the growth process, but the experience of successive multilateral trade negotiations showed a steady decline of such barriers over time, with several other developing countries taking advantage of it by expanding their secondary exports. Besides that, even within the primary products sector, there were several areas — fruits, vegetables, fisheries, dairies, to name a few — where the potential for export expansion from the developing countries had always been large, and which a number of developing countries had exploited to their fullest advantage. In fact, it may be argued that the primary reason for the slow expansion of exports for developing countries like India was not a slow growth of demand in the industrial countries for such exports, but a very large growth of domestic demand for them in the developing countries themselves. This growth of domestic demand was a direct result of the import substitution policy, which, by restricting foreign trade, made the production of tradable goods for domestic markets highly profitable.

In the 1950s and the 1960s, however, export pessimism was the order of the day in almost all developing countries, more particularly so in a large country like India where domestic markets were large enough to absorb the increased supply of tradable manufactures. It was hoped that, as industrialization proceeded at a high rate, there would be an increase in the export surplus of these products, thus eventually raising the country's export earnings. However, until such a period, scarcity of foreign exchange as a result of export stagnation and meagre foreign capital flows would remain a binding constraint on the economy's growth, thus justifying attempts to maximize the domestic production of investible goods as consistent with the Mahalanobis strategy. But as a result of this, the day when export increases at a significant rate might materialize was pushed only further into the future. Increasing exports depended very much upon a change in the culture of production, and the ability to adjust to the challenges of competition, and the maintenance of quality and standards as well as building up a wide network of marketing and financial infrastructure. India's inward looking economic policies were not conducive to the reorientation of the culture of production in this manner.

SOCIALISM

The third element of the Nehruvian development policy was, as mentioned above, socialism. The imprint of this element remained quite distinct in the policies of Nehru's successors, particularly those of Indira Gandhi. As years passed, the content of the concept was diluted, and the imprint became hazy. However, the idea was not quite rejected by any government until recent times. Socialism, as a slogan, if not in the form of a well-defined concept, has found a wide constituency in India, which no elected government has found easy to completely disregard.

Even for Nehru, the concept of socialism had to be adjusted to the Indian situation in the form of a socialistic pattern of society. It was not possible for him to opt for a widespread public ownership of the means of production. In India's mixed economy, large-scale private participation had come to firmly establish itself, almost entirely in agriculture and in a major way in industry as well. Socialism, in the Indian context, most clearly in Nehru's time though also quite visibly in later periods, was essentially a way of running the government and state policies with objectives related to egalitarianism or distributive social justice. It is these objectives which lent the appeal or the constituency to the concept of socialism, even though the methods of running the government associated with socialism were recognized as falling far short of the desirable.

In the context of planning for development, *a la* the Mahalanobis model, socialism came to be identified with a highly regulatory system of government. As the sectoral investment strategy of the government was not designed from the preferences of the market, it called for increasing government intervention. The government's policy, in fact, increasingly moved away from the market price related intervention mechanism through taxes and incentives to quantitative controls and regulations. The Second Five Year Plan made several statements suggesting such a regulatory mechanism was part and parcel of our planning system, thus displaying a distrust in the operation of the market mechanism and an attitude justifying the inefficiencies caused by allocative distortions in the name of planned development. With hindsight this was unfortunate. The costs of the distortions produced by reducing the potential output from the different activities where the government intervened were very large and decreased the potential volume of investible surplus that could have accelerated economic growth, even in terms of the investment strategy adopted in our planning models. In fact, it may be argued that the attachment among policy makers to the licensing and quantitative control system was the result of confusion between the instruments and the objectives of policy. In India, it took us quite some time to appreciate that the objectives of socialist development could be pursued by a set of policies which were more market oriented, operating on influencing the price mechanism rather than following a quantitative regulatory system falsely identified with socialist planning.

PUBLIC ENTERPRISE

A second feature of Indian socialism was the extraordinary importance attached to public enterprise. The first industrial policy resolution to demarcate areas of industrial activities to be operated by either the public sector or the private sector, or both sectors, was introduced during Nehru's prime ministership. Subsequent revisions did not change the basic approach until, in the 1990s, there was a radical departure from it. Though private enterprises were left with large areas of operation, public enterprises were supposed to operate in, besides defence-related industries, activities described as constituting the 'commanding heights' of the economy. This was rather loosely defined as activities having much forward and backward linkages so that engagement in these would allow public enterprises to have a definitive impact on the course of economic development. Clearly, expanding the operation of public enterprises was not the goal of socialist policies. Rather, public enterprises were to be viewed as instruments of planning for the realization of socialist objectives. As the years passed, this concept became diluted and many enterprises that could not possibly be identified with the commanding heights came under the purview of the public sector, in many cases through the nationalization of industries deserted by the private sector. In several areas, public enterprises operated with the sole aim of protecting jobs or creating employment. None of this was consistent with the original conception of the role of public enterprises in Indian planning.

Looking at public enterprises as instruments of planning also implied that market profitability would not be the only or even the main criterion by which the performance of these enterprises might be judged. Indeed, in many areas, public enterprises were expected to operate because market profitability fell short of social gains. In some other activities, where there was a natural monopoly, or the size of the required investment precluded competitive entry of other enterprises, the aim of public enterprises was to not extract monopoly profits. Rather, substantial fractions of the monopoly rent were passed on to the users of their products and services.

However, it is the profitability test of the market that usually makes private enterprises perform with efficiency. If the absence of the profitability test for public enterprises is not compensated for by other well formulated and transparent incentive systems, it is very difficult to ensure that public enterprises will function efficiently, minimizing their costs of operation.

Without an appropriate incentive system for their efficient performance, most public enterprises came to be operated in much the same way as government departments. There were very few objective criteria by which their performance could be evaluated, and bureaucratic controls and rent-seeking behaviour by political personnel were predominant. Again, this was unfortunate, because it was perfectly feasible to design, for the public enterprises, a system of operational autonomy with a transparent incentive system.

His usage has narrowed the public's understanding of what the state does in economic matters.

There is no doubt that government works not the impact of the functioning of public enterprise, there was a spread of the activity. Even when the government turned private, the expectations were not always met, and the government had to try to make it. They have always there was a little bit of change, did not make it. The state's public enterprise has been catching some of the government and not the state's means of management of poverty relief policies.

EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The first real question that posed for the widest constituency in Indian society was part of the social and social justice. Indeed, equity and social justice were part of the basic objectives of the Indian national movement, and were shared by all nationalist leaders, whether or not they believed in socialism. As we have noted at the very beginning, the concept of 'Swaraj' itself was an expression of these objectives as espoused by Gandhi and his followers, though many of them would not have gone so far as to associate these objectives with socialism. It was, again, Nehru who took the lead in associating socialism with the urge of the Indian national movement for equality, justice and social justice. Nehru's socialism was, of course, not based on class antagonism, but was more in the nature of promoting a welfare state, and was to work for both rapid economic growth and the maximum expansion of employment. Although Nehru's approach to socialism has been described by some writers as a trickle-down approach to equity or raising the incomes of the relatively poor, it was in fact both in principle and in practice much broader. Employment generation and expansion of the income opportunities of the poor was central to the type of economic growth envisaged: the Mahalanobis model and the related approach to planning were built upon modes of growth that maximized employment over the long term.

However, there was no real attempt to redistribute income or wealth, and the egalitarian approach of Indian socialist policies was essentially related to the upliftment of the poor. There were some serious attempts toward land reform, which could have, in principle, led to a substantial redistribution of wealth in the countryside. In practice, however, vested interests in the rural areas blunted quite effectively the redistributive edge of land-reform policies. Since the preoccupation at the time was with industrialization, the economic impact of the failure of land reforms did not prove to be a bottleneck to growth, and the Nehruvian socialists did not feel the pressure of taking up the cudgels against vested interests in agriculture. In the area of industry too, the class of entrepreneurs who could have resisted the expansion of the public sector in their domains were still unformed or, at any rate, not powerful enough to contribute to making this approach to

nationalism, a sense of social justice, socialist, also elements of public ownership, an interventionist and social engineering inspired state interventionism by expanding the domestic market for these products, as well as by expanding the supply of necessary inputs and services. Regulators, engineers and general civil-political functionaries, amongst the middle class, had to be persuaded to forsake capitalism. Thus, at one time, students raised slogans for socialism and growth (nationalist leaders' slogan then), almost as much as it did among the middle class the workers, the peasantry and the unemployed.

It was during Indira Gandhi's time that India's economic policies began to be strongly and fully pushed towards different economic growth. Indeed, it is possible to argue that Indira Gandhi enthusiastically adopted an anti-rich approach to policy in comparison to her predecessor, and consolidated her plans from the economy. As India's rate of growth kept falling short of targets, and the social problems of poverty, unemployment, ill-health and malnutrition more seriously aggravated, there was increasing pressure on the political leadership to make fundamental changes in policies that were consistent with the strong requirements of the masses. In the two, five months of her becoming the office of prime minister, Indira Gandhi tried to reverse some of the recent policies and tendencies, policies generated by the Second and Third Plans. There was a long discussion of the scope, and a move, attempt to liberalize the foreign trade system and the foreign exchange. She was confronted with several foreign and domestic pressures, and to foreign pressure, and for changing the policy of foreign trade to a free market system. However, when the international financial institutions, the IMF, or external financing requirements and when food crisis was posed after the droughts, she was persuaded that the economy of India was, and important, the only course for independent development was the free market model of aid, finance and socialism with planned development. This also gave her an image that clearly differentiated her from the right wing factions in her political party. The popularity of that image and a consistent commitment to socialism, particularly to the cause of the poor and the underprivileged, and demonstratively anti rich policies, allowed her to establish full command over Indian electoral politics.

Several policy measures of the time, such as anti-monopoly legislation, the abolition of privy purses, anti-large house restrictions on industrial licensing, several provisions of the foreign exchange regulation regime, and the dilution of foreign shares in Indian companies could be explained in terms of Indira Gandhi's political stance rather than in terms of their economic rationale or implications. But there were also a few measures that were built on the conflicting interests of the rich and the poor, which had a far-reaching impact on the economy. The most important of these was bank nationalization, which not only broke the nexus between the big business houses and the banks as financial intermediaries, but also effectively promoted the spread of banking services throughout the country, especially in rural areas. By

making the holding of financial assets remunerative, it contributed to the raising of the rate of savings and, thereby, to the growth of the economy. Although inefficiencies crept in later in the provision of banking services these did not neutralize the dynamic effects of increased savings and accessibility to loanable funds at reasonable rates, all of which was a breakthrough in a traditional economy dominated by moneylenders. Almost similar was the effect of coal nationalization, which led a frontal attack against the interests of a group of exploitative owners of coal mines who operated them with little regard for the environment, the preservation of exhaustible natural resources, or for the health, life and interests of workers. Within a few years, India's coal economy was totally transformed, with expanding production, profitability and an increase in real wages.

A much more significant development for India's economic policy was Indira Gandhi's extension of Nehruvian socialism to poverty eradication in terms of 'affirmative action' or programmes for 'empowering the poor'. For the first time in the middle of the 1960s, attempts were made to estimate poverty in terms of expenditures on a basket of consumer goods, thus arriving at some minimum requirements for a basic standard of living. This also generated more informed estimates as to the number of the poor. If a country's GDP and total consumption expenditure grow at a rate higher than its population, there is an increase in the per capita consumption expenditure. If there is no adverse movement in the distribution of income and expenditure, a reduction in the proportion of people living below poverty will follow. Pitamber Pant, the first to undertake a systematic study of the issue in the Planning Commission, worked out a growth path of the economy with a fifteen-year perspective that would make a significant dent on poverty. During the Fifth Five Year Plan, Sukhamoy Chakravarty worked out a growth profile which would accelerate the process of poverty reduction with the adoption of redistributive measures that would raise the consumption expenditures of the poor at a faster rate than that of higher income groups. In practice, these redistributive measures took the form of increased public expenditure for the poor through a large number of employment-generation and asset-formation programmes for the unemployed, underemployed or self-employed, as well as schemes for health, nutrition, primary education and social development. The objectives of all such programmes was to improve the capability of the poor — to 'empower' them and not just hand out 'doles' or welfare payments. Since all such social expenditure programmes had to be financed from within the total availability of resources, what was implied was that revenues had to be collected either through taxes or through inflation from the richer sections that did not directly benefit from these programmes. Thus, there was a clear redistributive dimension to the development programmes, which was brought into play in a manner that had not been evident in earlier years. The political implication of all this was a sharpening of the conflict of interests between different groups in society.

and the firm establishment of Indira Gandhi's image as a champion of the **poor and the deprived**.

The redistributive dimension of development policy was extended to also address the problems of regional disparity in India — an important characteristic of the country's reality. There are major imbalances in the levels of development between the different states and regions of the country, with the hilly and border regions lagging far behind the populous midland areas. Within the relatively advanced regions too, there are backward districts with underdeveloped infrastructure and inadequate social development. During Indira Gandhi's term in office, special programmes for regional development were introduced, and those that had been initiated by previous governments were further extended. Indeed, reduction of regional imbalances became one of the cardinal principles of Indira Gandhi's policies. Expenditure on such special programmes, which were to be financed from the government's limited overall kitty, was not quite in line with the demands of electoral politics. It could be argued, for instance, that higher expenditure on social development programmes in the more populous states would have secured more popular support to the government. However, programmes aimed at addressing regional disparity did play a very major role in consolidating the national integration of the country and in promoting the spirit of national identity. They also helped promote Indira Gandhi's image as a champion of that identity, thus putting her firmly within the mainstream of India's **national movement**.

It may be useful to dwell on this aspect of Indira Gandhi's image a little further in order to appreciate more fully the evolution of development policy during her term in office. Those who knew her would certainly vouch for her intense patriotism and the centrality of the concerns of equity and social justice to her understanding of development policy. It is not necessary, however, to invoke this subjective factor in order to understand her approach to India's development policy. For that, it is sufficient if one accepts that she was a pragmatic politician who realized that her electoral strength derived mainly from her mass appeal, and that she was a statesman who understood the importance of regional harmony and the spirit of national independence necessary to maintain India's identity. The popular perception that she was a champion of the poor as well as the identification of her image with the mainstream of India's national movement are what allowed her to establish a **firm footing in electoral politics**.

FROM IDEOLOGY TO PRAGMATISM

It is possible to argue that, in giving the Nehruvian concept of socialism a new dimension by pursuing affirmative policies aimed at the upliftment of the poor and the backward, Indira Gandhi was guided not by ideology but by pragmatism as well. She demonstrated her ability to adjust policies to the

changing requirements of the country. It is difficult to identify in any of the measures she adopted a firm conviction or commitment to either the Soviet brand of socialism or the Fabian approach to the welfare state. She was keen on both rapid economic growth and social development, but always with a clear and central message on fighting poverty. She saw and accepted the need for planning more as an instrument for designing and promoting programmes of development, and not so much as a means of regulating investible resources or for centralizing the efforts for development. The industrial licensing system, which continued during her period, was seen more as an instrument for preventing the concentration of wealth and industrial assets and the growth of large houses, and not so much as a means of channelling investment in order to fulfil plan targets. Though industrialization retained its importance as a source of employment and modernization, agriculture also regained importance with the promotion of investment in irrigation and improvements in the technology of cultivation. During her time, the green revolution changed the contours of Indian agriculture and, in spite of extracting agricultural surplus through changes in the terms of trade for expanding industrial investment, the support price for agricultural crops was systematically raised to encourage increased production. There was also a greater preoccupation with expanding the public distribution system to protect the poor from the effects of the increase in food prices that resulted from the rise in support prices. There was less concern about the possible change in the terms of trade between agricultural products and manufactures moving against industry.

With all these changes, the theoretical presumption for the import substitution strategy that derived from the Mahalanobis model was also undermined. There was clear recognition of the need for export expansion, and numerous schemes were introduced to promote the growth of exports. There was an increasing consciousness of the distortionary effects of the regulatory regimes and the waste of potential output resulting from the inefficient use of resources. As mentioned above, Indira Gandhi tried at the very beginning of her term as prime minister to move away from the regulatory regime. However, that initial attempt was aborted by the lack of foreign exchange required to meet the increased demand for imports caused by the easing of the repressive regime. Later, even during the 1970s, Indira Gandhi tried to relax the control system several times, particularly with regard to imports, and also to follow a more flexible exchange rate policy. But developments in the international economy slowed down these processes again and again. Indeed, the oil price hike in 1973 that sharply raised the prices of petroleum products forced her to adopt stringent policies designed to repress domestic demand and restrict the demand for imports. It was difficult to work towards liberalizing the domestic economy in that sort of international environment.

Another highly significant characteristic of Indira Gandhi's policy was a

clear commitment to fiscal discipline. During the late 1950s and the early 1960s, many Indian economists talked about 'forced savings', or raising the government's command over investible resources through inflationary financing. But the idea did not quite gain ground, particularly during Indira Gandhi's time, because inflation was basically an anti-poor and regressive instrument for raising resources. Indeed, a rate of inflation above 10 per cent was considered intolerable in the Indian context, although money wages in the country were always largely, if not wholly, indexed. India's vast, poor masses rarely received money wages, and inflation affecting their daily needs quite visibly curtailed their purchasing power. Indira Gandhi's government, with its strong pro-poor stance, tried everything in its power to control inflation, which explains its adherence to fiscal discipline. There was a sustained revenue surplus throughout her period, in spite of very strong demands on resources for different kinds of social and other expenditures. Indeed, the oil crisis of 1973 raised the rate of inflation to nearly 20 per cent, which transmitted almost a danger signal to the government. The fiscal repression that was followed immediately after the crisis was unparalleled in India's history and, in spite of the severity of its impact, the policy was strictly adhered to until the inflation rate was brought down to almost zero within two years.

The way in which Indira Gandhi handled the oil crisis illustrates a major point about her approach to development policy. She was trying to build up her popular image through measures that were expected to genuinely benefit the people, especially the poor. But she was not a populist and did not hesitate to take a stand that she felt was appropriate for the benefit of the people in the long run, even if the decision affected some of them adversely in the short run and damaged her pro-poor, pro-worker image. Anti-inflationary adjustment policies after the oil crisis, and the fiscal discipline she followed, were often not very popular. Indeed, she did not hesitate to respond with all the might of state power to the railway workers' national strike, which threatened to disrupt the entire economy at a time when India was going through a difficult period of adjustment to rising oil prices and an unfavourable international climate. This event, in fact, marked the unfortunate beginning of the process that led to the Emergency of the mid-1970s. But at no point of time during her term as prime minister could she be accused of lacking the courage to take firm decisions because she feared the repercussions these would have on her popularity among voters.

DEVELOPMENT POLICY IN THE 1980s

Indira Gandhi was out of power for about two-and-a-half years between 1977 and 1980 mainly because of the excesses of the Emergency. When she assumed the office of prime minister once again in 1980, she went about reforming India's development policy in a much more systematic

manner. By that time, the costs of distortions and inefficiencies of the regulatory regime as described above had become all the more apparent, and the government started taking action to remove the controls and regulations and set the economy on a path of rapid development. But she was very careful not to give up her image of representing the mainstream of Indian nationalism – of striving for India's development with social justice and equity and, more generally, of following pro-poor policies. A too sharp break from past policies toward liberalization and market-based allocation of resources may have disrupted the economic process, shutting down many industries, winding up several activities, and thus increasing unemployment and very adversely affecting large numbers of people, especially the weakest and most vulnerable. Even if an economy picks up a higher rate of growth by moving away from inefficient to more efficient activities, the adjustments required of the production structure take time. In less developed economies, the time taken to make such adjustments is much greater because of the inflexibilities in the system and immobilities of the factors of production. As market-based allocation of resources always tends to favour people with larger initial stocks of assets and income, market-oriented policies also naturally generate a perception of following anti-poor and pro-rich policies. As Indira Gandhi did not want such a perception about her government to become entrenched, her move into the adjustment phase was accompanied by clear-cut policies aimed at protecting the poor and the vulnerable.

In 1981, she signed an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), bringing almost six billion dollar commitment of funds from that institution. It was one of the least conditional of all IMF agreements on record. India approached the IMF not because there was a balance of payments crisis, as is usually the case when a country seeks IMF support. The Indian approach was based on a contingency requirement of a possible excess demand for foreign exchange that was expected to result from the economic reforms that India planned to introduce. The IMF had agreed that Indian reforms would be introduced in a step-by-step fashion, by relaxing the controls and regulations in such a manner that they ceased to be binding constraints, and by maintaining fiscal discipline even after carrying out pro-poor social expenditure programmes. The effect of the relaxation of the regulatory regime for both domestic and foreign trade activities was felt almost immediately, with an increase in the growth of the GDP and also in exports and foreign exchange reserves. India terminated its agreement with the IMF, with full commendations from that institution, well before drawing on the total amount of promised support.

Indian exports and output may have possibly grown even further had it not been for a debilitating strike of textile workers that virtually closed down, for almost a year, the largest industry in the country. There were also other political factors, such as the growth of militancy and ethnic strife in Punjab and the North East, which adversely affected production and transport

systems in the country and set in a three-point programme to concentrate on the maintenance of law and order. The first step was to meet the demand for security in the provinces and police officers were posted to the most part by forming a Village and its surrounding regions, thus making the food and other necessary items available in a safe distribution system. In spite of all these problems, the reform and development started was rapid and successful, and his policies were by and large aimed at seeking to advance the process of liberalization and reform. Three committees were set up by Indira Gandhi to design a mechanism to stabilize the financial sector, foreign trade sector and public enterprise. The signal went out that the government was committed to reforms, which in itself was a factor contributing to the rise in private investment.

After Indira Gandhi's death and during Rajiv Gandhi's leadership, the reform process was accelerated toward further liberalization of India's trade regime and domestic production. The Indian economy continued to grow at a rapid rate—much higher than the average growth rate up until the end of the 1970s. But the pressures on the government to expand public spending remained high, not only for programmes of social expenditure but also for domestic law and order and defence activities. The revenue deficits started rising very rapidly with the beginning of the erosion of fiscal discipline. Although the constraints on foreign investment were substantially relaxed, its inflow did not increase significantly. Access to long term funds still had to be sought through international institutions, which were not prepared to expand their lending to India very significantly. Instead of working out projects and policies to attract such long term lending, the government took the soft option of increasing short term borrowing in order to finance the growing fiscal deficit. As a result, the government accumulated a significant amount of short term foreign debt, with all the difficulties of rescheduling and refinancing those amounts.

Our assessment of the evolution of India's development policy in the 1980s arrives at four major conclusions.

- a) First, these policies succeeded in breaking away from the earlier low trend growth rate of GDP of around 3.5 per cent a year in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. The average growth rate of GDP in the 1980s was between 5.5 per cent and 7.7 per cent a year, which produced a per capita growth rate of GDP of almost 3.5 per cent a year. This, itself, was responsible for a growth rate of per capita consumption expenditure that was more than double the rate in the previous thirty years, and which made a significant contribution to reducing the level of poverty in India. The large pro-poor beneficiary programmes and employment expansion schemes carried out in these years at the very least prevented an adverse movement in the distribution of income, if it did not actually reduce inequality in a significant manner.

- b) Second, the principal explanatory factor for such an acceleration of the growth rate must be attributed to the effect of policy reforms towards the liberalisation of the economy and the removal of the controls and regulations that at least partially served to relax the binding constraints on production and investment in the country. There were no other major changes in economic policy during this period when one compares the policies of the 1980s with those of the previous decade. The increased efficiency in the allocation of resources and investment that resulted from each deregulation not only enhanced current levels of output, but also raised the expectations of future growth, which stimulated an increase in private investment in both industry and agriculture. Had these reforms been strengthened and pursued more vigorously through the programmes formulated by the committees on reforming the financial sector, the foreign trade sector and the public enterprise sector (as referred to above), the impact of these reforms on raising the overall efficiency of the economy as well as the rate of investment would have been higher, pushing up the growth rate even further.
- c) Third, as the rates of public investment and social expenditure were also kept up side by side with rising private investment, there was increasing pressure to mobilize domestic savings in order to finance such investments. Although the domestic rates of savings also increased with the growth of the GDP, maintaining strict fiscal discipline and restraining fiscal deficit and government dissavings became, increasingly, the critical requirements for sustaining the pace of development. A country's total rate of investment, public and private taken together, has to be financed by the total of the rate of domestic savings and the rate of inflow of foreign savings. For any given level of foreign savings, an increase in the dissavings of the government reduces the resources available for financing investment, raising the rate of interest and lowering the actual level of private investment. The total of public and private investment may exceed the domestic rate of savings only if the inflow of foreign savings increases, thereby raising a country's foreign debt and liabilities that must be met with foreign exchange, and thus making the process of development increasingly unviable. In other words, for the successful implementation of a reform-based development policy, the essential requirement is the maintenance of fiscal discipline and the reduction of fiscal deficits.
- d) Fourth, while the process of reforms widened and deepened during the period, there was no commensurate success in strengthening fiscal discipline. As mentioned above, the revenue surpluses of the earlier years were steadily reduced and resulted, finally, in an increasing revenue deficit, with increasing recourse to debt financing, both domestic and foreign.

For many years, the government's expenditure on social development was far below both the revenue and the expenditure potential of the government. These reforms are particularly important in order to keep the government's budget in a state of revenue-expenditure equilibrium, so that the state is not forced to take the gamut from the private sector and society that it has been doing. Programmes were initiated during this period, and carried out more fully and vigorously in the early 1980s, for reforming the tax system, which included customs duties. As a result, the efficiency of the tax system was improved. However, not much could be done to reform the expenditure system, to direct the flow of public expenditure to a minimum after covering the essential requirements of the social programmes.

FAILURE OF GOVERNANCE

The main failure of the development policies of the 1980s would thus be related to the inability to improve the fiscal discipline of the system. This was, again, mainly due to the inability of the government leadership to design and implement an improved system of governance. In retrospect, it should have been clear to everyone concerned that any development policy executed by the government, whether for a socialist restructuring of the economy or the development of a mixed economy guided by a public policy for increased investment and growth together with social development, cannot hope to be successful without a proper system of governance. The agents of the government that bear the responsibility of carrying out the programmes must have the incentive to do so, and must be subject to a proper reward-penalty system for effectively monitoring and executing it.

There were two main agents of the government that were responsible for carrying out these programmes. The first was the public enterprise system with the directors, managers and workers of the different public sector entities; the second was the bureaucracy which was responsible for executing public programmes outside the public enterprises. Reform of both agencies, which was extremely important for the successful implementation of any government programme, was neglected through all these years.

The public expenditure programmes for social development, which became a major instrument for adding the egalitarian dimension to our development policy, were increasingly wasteful. These programmes were seldom designed in a cost-effective manner, and the delivery mechanism of the programmes rarely included any system of accountability or monitoring by the beneficiaries of the programmes. Had the cost-effectiveness of these programmes been improved, and had they been delivered more effectively to the targeted beneficiaries, it may have been possible for us to achieve a much higher level of social development, a level commensurate with the substantial expansion of government expenditure under these programmes. The Panchayati Raj system introduced in Rajiv Gandhi's time had the

potential of ushering in a new method of decentralized development, wherein the beneficiaries at the grassroots level would have greater authority over the development process and be able to monitor the implementation of development programmes more effectively. In actual practice, however, the Panchayati Raj system has not yet gathered the momentum it should have and, therefore, has not yet been able to arrest the waste or misuse of resources that has become typical.

ECONOMIC REFORMS OF THE 1990s

An analysis of the experience of economic reform in the 1990s confirms some of the observations made above. In 1991, in response to a crisis of foreign exchange management related to the Gulf War situation, the government introduced a whole package of economic reforms, which, in effect, abolished the control and permit system almost completely. Although this was not fully associated by complementary reforms in the legal system and the financial sector, the effect of these reforms was to accentuate the reform process introduced in the 1980s. The achievements were highly significant. The growth rates after the halting achievements of the initial years picked up significantly, climbing up to more than 7 per cent in the last three years of the Eighth Plan. Similar was the achievement in the growth of exports and foreign exchange reserves when, for the first time in Indian history, there was a rapid increase in the flow of foreign direct and portfolio investment. The expansion of public investment was more restrained, which affected capacity creation in the infrastructure sector, but the rate of private investment increased very significantly, by almost 17 per cent a year, in the last three years of the Eighth Plan. In spite of a significant dissaving in the government sector, the rate of domestic savings increased to almost 26 per cent a year from 23 per cent of the Seventh Five Year Plan period. A large part of this rise was due to improved savings in the household sector. There was also a significant increase in the savings of public enterprises as well as the private corporate sector. The economy quite clearly set itself on a long-term growth path of at least 7 per cent which, in itself, may be regarded as a great achievement.

However, the reform process remained incomplete. The financial sector reforms, together with changes in the legal system necessary to support the expansion in the rates of investment, production and employment, were still a long way away from being capable of sustaining the market-oriented liberalization process initiated earlier. However, the most important gaps that persisted in the process resulted from the inability to contain fiscal indiscipline and to change the rules and procedures of public governance. In a way, these two gaps were interrelated.

Fiscal indiscipline was also largely the effect of a failure of governance. A package of internally consistent tax reforms had already been introduced.

It was possible to improve upon that over time. A critical requirement for the implementation of these reforms is to establish changes in the tax administration, which is an essential dimension of governance. The reform of the expenditure system on the other hand could not be achieved without meeting the requirements of cost effectiveness of expenditure programmes, their implementation and delivery, which were also essential problems of governance. Public enterprises still remained, broadly speaking, agencies for executing the production programmes of the government with large numbers of enterprises losing money heavily, and with a large scope of improvement even with regard to profit making institutions. These public enterprises were practically untouched by the major reform programmes. With these problems of governance remaining virtually unresolved, the process of economic reforms at the end of the 1990s is confronted with almost the same problems it was a decade ago.

M.S. SWAMINATHAN

50 Years of Progress in Indian Agriculture

INTRODUCTION

India has seen transformations in the face of the great Bengal famine of 1943-4. So, we can say that India's economic development began in 1943. Everything else was then not agriculture. Thanks to the progress of technology, science and public policies introduced since the beginning of the first five-year plan in 1950, India has transformed itself from a country with a 'hunger bowl' image to one which occupies the first or second position in terms of production and area in several major crops (Table 1). We also occupy the second position in milk production globally. Moreover, we have been able to build substantial buffer stocks of foodgrains (Table 2).

TABLE 1
INDIA'S SHARE IN THE WORLD PRODUCTION AND
AREA FOR MAJOR CROPS, 1995-7

Crops	India's Share		India's Rank	
	Produce (%)	Area (%)	Produce	Area
Wheat	11.6	11.2	2	2
Rice	21.4	28.5	2	1
Coarse Grains	3.4	9.0	5	3
Potatoes	6.2	6.0	5	5
Pulses	26.0	36.6	1	1
Groundnut	28.6	35.2	1	1
Sugarcane	22.6	20.0	2	2
Tea	28.3	18.5	1	2
Tobacco	8.3	8.7	3	2
Jute	52.5	51.5	1	1
Cotton, Lint	14.0	20.7	3	1

Source: FAO, 1997.

up to the dawn of India's independence in 1947, the country developed the capacity to produce about 6 million tonnes of wheat. In 1966, the country imported nearly 10 million tonnes of wheat, largely through the PL 480 programme of the United States to fill the gap between supply and demand.

Several measures to stimulate food production including land reform, irrigation, fertilizer production, strengthening of research and organization of a national extension service were initiated in the 1950s. Production of wheat and rice went up but productivity per unit area of land remained practically stagnant. Enhanced production came from an increase in both total cropped area and irrigated area. Wheat production went up to 12 million tonnes in 1964, which from the point of view of monsoon behaviour, was a good agricultural year.

In order to enhance productivity in irrigated areas, the Government of India initiated the Intensive Agricultural District Programme (IADP) in 1961. The aim was to introduce good seeds and a package of agronomic practices which could help to optimize the benefit from irrigation water. Unfortunately, the early IADP experience was not encouraging. It was found that the package of practices promoted had one important missing ingredient, namely, varieties which can respond well to good irrigation and soil fertility management. It is this missing ingredient that was provided in 1966 through the High Yielding Varieties Programme in wheat, rice, maize, Sorghum (jowar) and Pearl Millet (bajra). Wheat production rose to nearly 17 million tonnes in 1968. To commemorate this quantum jump in wheat production the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, released a special stamp titled 'Wheat Revolution' in July 1968. Soon afterwards an American Agricultural expert, Dr William Gadd, described the phenomenon as 'Green Revolution' since similar productivity improvement was visible in rice. I had then described what was happening as 'land-saving agriculture', since the pathway of production improvement was higher productivity. 'Forest-saving agriculture' may be a more appropriate term, since agricultural expansion is often at the expense of forest area. After several thousand years, the stagnation in yield was broken in wheat, rice and other major food crops. How did this all happen?

Systematic breeding of crop varieties which respond to higher levels of plant nutrition started in India in 1952 when at the instance of the late Dr K. Ramaiah, a programme for incorporating genes for fertilizer response from temperate japonica rice varieties from Japan into indica strains was initiated at the Central Rice Research Institute, Cuttack, under the sponsorship of FAO and Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR). I worked on this project during 1954 under the guidance of the late Dr N. Parthasarathi. Our major aim was to select from segregating populations of indica x japonica crosses, lines which showed the ability to utilize effectively about 100 Kg of Nitrogen per hectare. With this quantity of nutrient supply, about 5 tonnes of rice per hectare can be produced. This programme led to varieties like

ADYI-27 in Tamil Nadu and Mashan in Malaya. Several genetic problems arose, rendering the speedy selection of high yielding rice varieties from indica \times japonica crosses difficult. With the advent in the early 1960s of the semi-dwarf, non-lodging, relatively photo-insensitive indica varieties based on the Dee-gee-woo gen dwarfing gene identified in China, interest in transferring genes for fertilizer response from japonica varieties waned. Semi-dwarf indica rices like Tachung Native 1, IRs and Jwa provided the initial material for the High Yielding Varieties Programme. In later breeding experiments, tropical japonicas from Taiwan also proved useful as parents.

The late Dr B. P. Pal initiated a similar programme in wheat at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi, in wheat. The emphasis of the wheat-breeding programme of IARI carried out by such eminent breeders like Drs S. P. Kohli, V. S. Mathur and M. V. Rao in collaboration with plant pathologists like Drs R. Prasad and I. M. Joshi was on both disease resistance and yield. This ultimately resulted in varieties like NP 809 possessing a broad spectrum of resistance to stem, stripe and leaf rusts, and NP 824 possessing ability to respond to about 50 Kgs of Nitrogen.

When I joined IARI in late 1954, I initiated in collaboration with several colleagues and students a research programme for developing non-lodging and fertilizer-responsive varieties of wheat, on the lines of the work earlier initiated in rice. At that time the research strategy adopted had three components. First, crosses were made between the semi-dwarf, stiff straw *compactum* and *sphaerococcum* subspecies of *T. aestivum* with cultivated bread wheats. Second, attempts were made to induce erectoides mutants in commercial wheat varieties through the use of radiations and chemical mutagens. Third, studies on the potential for increasing straw stiffness through different chemical treatments were initiated. Unfortunately, in all these three approaches, short and stiff straw was always associated with short panicles with fewer grains (see Swaminathan, 1964, 1968). The reason why straw stiffness became such an essential prerequisite for favourable response to water and fertilizer, is the tendency to lodge or fall down among the then cultivated tall wheat varieties when fertilizer was applied. Also, such lodging made irrigation difficult during the grain development phase, when the crop benefits much from water availability. Thus, with the earlier tall varieties it was difficult to get economic response to the application of mineral fertilizers and adequate irrigation water. Average wheat yields stagnated at less than 1 tonne per hectare. This is why the breeding of non-lodging varieties was accorded such high priority during the 1950s, when the country had taken to the path of expanding the area under irrigation and manufacturing mineral fertilizers.

During the late 1950s, scientific publications on the work done under the leadership of Dr Orville Vogel in the Washington State of the United States of America on the transfer of dwarfing genes from the Norin 10 wheat variety to North American winter wheats started appearing (Fig. 1). When requested, Dr Vogel was kind enough to send seeds of Gaines, a semi-dwarf

as a source of energy, soil and genetic. He further suggested that the M.V. Wheat in Mexico should be substituted for seeds of semi-dwarf varieties in a spring wheat background because wheat seeds have more of nutrients in flower and set seeds).

In March 1961, a few small young wheat strains received by Dr Borlaug in the International Wheat Wheat Program, now in the US Department of Agriculture, were given to the M.V. Wheat in the field at IARI. Their phenology was most impressive. Their total cultural height and long panicle besides the robust aphids tolerance, resistance and compactness and robustness and resistance to diseases in which their height was compared with small panicles.

In May 1961, I observed Dr B. C. Paul who was then Director of IARI, requesting him to arrange for the visit of Dr Borlaug to India and for obtaining a wide range of wheat strains material promising the National Institute of Wheat from Mexico. I suggested to our letter who we should take up immediately a few small wheat breeding programs based on genes which do not have a deleterious effect on the panicle. Mr. Paul was forwarded by Dr Paul to the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry requested Dr R. W. Campbell of the International Institute for the promotion of the visit of Dr Borlaug and for the supply of wheat seeds material. Dr Borlaug visited India in March 1961 and also a visit to India in September 1963. A detailed report on the trip is included with the Mexican Wheat material was presented at the All India Wheat Research Workers' Conference held at Delhi in August 1963. Swaminathan (1963) also proposed in 1963 that we should start a National Demonstration Programme in farmers' fields both to verify the results obtained in research plots and to introduce farmers to the new opportunities opened up by semi-dwarf varieties for improving very considerably the productivity of wheat (Swaminathan 1966, 1971). When small farmers, who with the help of scientists organized the National Demonstration Programme, harvested over 8 tonnes of wheat per hectare, its impact on the minds of other farmers was electric. The clamour for seeds began and the area under high yielding varieties of wheat rose from 4 hectares in 1963-4 to over 4 million hectares in 1971-2. This was because of the bold decision taken in 1966 at the instance of C. Subramaniam, the then Minister for Food and Agriculture, to import 18 000 tonnes of seed of the Mexican semi-dwarf varieties, Lerma Rojo 64A and Sonora 64. C. Subramaniam (1995) has recently chronicled the major policy decisions taken during 1964-7 leading to the green revolution. C. Subramaniam was ably supported by the late B. Sivaraman, the then Agriculture Secretary and by a panel of Scientists headed by Dr K. Ramiah in designing and introducing the High Yielding Varieties Programme.

I observed in 1967 a tendency among farmers with relatively large holdings in north-west India to use large quantities of fertilizers and to grow in large and contiguous areas a single genetic strain. In my Presidential address

to the Agricultural Sciences Section of the Indian Science Congress held at Varanasi in January, 1968. I therefore dealt with the need for adding the dimension of ecological sustainability in efforts to improve yield and for greater support for agricultural research and extension (Swaminathan, 1968).
I wish to quote what I said then.

Exploitive agriculture offers great possibilities if carried out in a scientific way, but poses great dangers if carried out with only an immediate profit motive. The emerging exploitive farming community in India should become aware of this. Intensive cultivation of land without conservation of soil fertility and soil structure would lead, ultimately, to the springing up of deserts. Irrigation without arrangements for drainage would result in soils getting alkaline or saline. Indiscriminate use of pesticides, fungicides and herbicides could cause adverse changes in biological balance as well as lead to an increase in the incidence of cancer and other diseases, through the toxic residues present in the grains or other edible parts. Unscientific tapping of underground water will lead to the rapid exhaustion of this wonderful capital resource left to us through ages of natural farming. The rapid replacement of numerous locally adapted varieties with one or two high-yielding strains in large contiguous areas would result in the spread of serious diseases capable of wiping out entire crops. Therefore the initiation of exploitive agriculture without a proper understanding of the various consequences of every one of the changes introduced into traditional agriculture, and without first building up a proper scientific and training base to sustain it, may only lead us, in the long run, into an era of agricultural disaster rather than one of agricultural prosperity.

Even in the very first year of the semi-dwarf wheat breeding programme involving the material sent from Mexico by Dr N.E. Borlaug, namely 1963, we initiated the following five pronged strategy for breeding a wide range of high yielding varieties possessing a broad spectrum of resistance to major biotic and abiotic stresses.

- a. Direct introduction of promising Mexican wheats; this led to the release of Lerma Rojo 64 A and Sonora 64.
- b. Selection from the advanced generation material received from Mexico; this led to the release of Kalyan Sona and Sonalika.
- c. Hybridization between Mexican strains and Indian varieties; this resulted in many high-yielding and rust-resistant strains in different parts of the country.
- d. Mutation breeding for changing the red grain colour of Lerma Rojo 64A and Sonora 64; this led to the release of Pusa Lerma and Sharbati Sonora.
- e. Crossing the semi-dwarf *T. aestivum* material with *T. durum* varieties, in order to produce semi-dwarf *T. durum*. *Durum* varieties like Malavika resulted from such crosses.

In all cases, attention was paid to disease resistance and grain quality from the point of view of export marketing. Although the donor varieties would never have expressed their yield potential without appropriate agronomic practices such as fertilization, at least during the first adaptation at the crown root initiation stage.

Anticipating resistance to a real potential environmental problem was strengthened and a wide variety of high yielding strains possessing resistance or tolerance to the principal diseases causing organisms were developed. I am mentioning this now to illustrate that agricultural scientists were fully alive to the need for conducting an action-reaction analysis while introducing new technologies. Such awareness led to intensified effort in varietal diversification and to the pyramiding of genes for tolerance to biotic and abiotic stresses. This is why wheat production continued to show an upward trend during the last 30 years. The remarkable speed with which the high yielding varieties were identified from the initial Mexican material and later developed within the country was the result of the multi-location testing and interdisciplinary research organized under the All India Coordinated Wheat Research Project of the ICAR. The country owes a deep debt of gratitude to the first coordinator of this programme, Dr A.B. Joshi for his vision and dynamism and to his successors, Drs S.P. Kohli, M.V. Rao, A. Austin, I.P. Tandon and Dr S. Nagarajan. The co-ordinated wheat project is an outstanding exercise in meaningful, international and interdisciplinary co-operation. We salute the late Dr B.P. Pal who initiated both organized wheat breeding and co-ordinated varietal testing programmes in the country. We also recall with gratitude the invaluable services rendered by the late Dr R.G. Anderson, who served as Joint Co-ordinator of the All India Wheat Research Project between 1964 and 1970. Dr Ralph W. Cummings, Field Director of the Rockefeller Foundation in New Delhi between 1958 and 1966, responded to our requests with speed and our thanks go to him. Above all, numerous young research workers and scholars participated with enthusiasm in the different aspects of the wheat programme, including the organization of a Seed Village in the Jounti Village of the Khanjwala Block of Delhi State (Swaminathan, 1968). Dr Norman E. Borlaug remained and continues to remain a pillar of strength to the wheat research and development programme of our country. Another great blessing of the wheat programme has been the continued leadership provided by outstanding wheat breeders like the late V.S. Mathur, Dr Khem Singh Gill, Dr Y.M. Upadhyia, Dr S.M. Gandhi, Dr Y.R. Mehta, Dr Dhani Ram Vasudeva and many others. Dr D.S. Athwal of the Punjab Agricultural University provided dynamic leadership to the programme during 1963-5. Breeding efforts alone would not have borne fruit but for the outstanding support given by plant pathologists, agronomists, soil chemists and specialists in other disciplines. In short, the participants in the wheat research programme functioned like members of a symphony orchestra. Such harmony and co-operation led to historically path-breaking results.

Advances in wheat production also serve as an illustration of the value of fusion between political will and scientific skill. But for the political action taken by Bharat Ratna C. Subramaniam, scientific results might have just **remained in the laboratory.**

At the institutional level, it is the Memorandum of Agreement by ICAR and CIMMYT that gave the impetus to the whole programme. The ICAR-CIMMYT partnership provides a model which deserves widespread emulation under present day conditions characterized by the rapid expansion of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)-based research and shrinking of research designed for national and international public good. Public good rather than commercial profit should be the principal aim of research on crops fundamental to food security, like wheat and rice. We are indebted to the leaders of ICAR and CIMMYT for demonstrating the power of symbiotic partnership in agricultural research.

In the ultimate analysis, it is only farm men and women who produce food. Scientists, administrators and political leaders can only stimulate and support them. The hero of the wheat revolution is the hard-working farmer. Hence, I would like to conclude with an extract from an article I wrote in the *Illustrated Weekly of India* in 1969:

Brimming with enthusiasm, hard-working, skilled and determined, the Punjab farmer has been the backbone of the wheat revolution. Revolutions are usually associated with the young, but in this revolution, age has been no obstacle to participation. Farmers, young and old, educated and uneducated, have easily taken to the new agronomy. It has been heart-warming to see young college graduates, retired officials, ex-army men, illiterate peasants and small farmers queuing to get the new seeds. At least in the Punjab, the divorce between intellect and labour which has been the bane of our agriculture is vanishing.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

I would first like to deal with opportunities in rainfed farming.

Historically, attention to developing rainfed agriculture dates back to the year 1880, when the First Famine Commission was appointed by the then British government. A significant programme on dryland agriculture research was, however, initiated only fifty years later. It was in 1933-5 that the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research (now the Indian Council of Agricultural Research or ICAR) sponsored a Dry Farming Scheme at five centres — Sholapur, Bijapur, Raichur, Hagari and Rohtak. The Indian Meteorological Department also started giving detailed information on the relationship between monsoon behaviour and food production. Crop-weather calendars were issued periodically. The setting up of a Soil and Water Conservation Research and Training Institute at Dehradun in 1954 was perhaps the first initiative made in independent India to focus on problems of soil and water

CONSERVATION. Some of the activities for the conservation and development of water resources have been listed and listed under the various institutions and units of the Ministry of dryland crops combined with various the national research and development water management. A knowledge of research and development related programmes is given below:

History of Dryland Research and Development Schemes

<i>Year</i>	<i>Research and Development Programme</i>
1880	First Famine Commission
1923	Dry Farming Research on 4 acre plot at Manari, near Pali
1928	Report of the Board Commission on Agriculture
1933-35	Dry Farming Schemes at 5 centres
1951	Soil and Water Conservation Research Institute at Dabhadur with 8 Soil Conservation Centres
1959	Central Arid Zone Research Institute
1956-61	Several dry farming projects
1962	Indian Grasslands and Fodder Research Institute at Jhansi
1970	All India Coordinated Research Project for Dryland Agriculture (AICRPDA) at 23 Centres
1972	Establishment of the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) at Hyderabad
1973	Rural Works Programme of 1970 renamed as Drought Prone Areas Programme
1976	Operational Research Projects to validate technologies in farmers' fields
1977	Desert Development Programme
1983	Model Watersheds at 47 sites
1985	Central Research Institute for Dryland Agriculture (CRIDA) at Hyderabad
1988	National Research Centre for Agroforestry at Jhansi
1990	National Research Centre for Arid Horticulture at Bikaner
1990	National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Agriculture (NWDPA)
1991	Several Watershed Projects with support from World Bank, DANIDA, EEC, FRG, and DFID of UK
1993	Ministry of Rural Development Programme on Watershed Development in DPAP districts of the country

Apart from the Government of India support, several projects were initiated with external funding. In the 1960s, a dry-farming project had been started in Anantapur district in Andhra Pradesh with support from the Government of France. The All India Co-ordinated Research Project for Dryland Agriculture got extensive support from CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) through a bilateral collaboration agreement between the Governments of India and Canada signed in 1970. Almost coinciding with that event, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) was established at Hyderabad in 1972 by the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). A number of watershed projects, starting with an Indo-British project at Indore in the early 1980s, received external funding from the United Kingdom, World Bank, European Economic Commission (EEC) and Governments of Denmark and Germany.

To sum up, over fifty years of research and development efforts by the National Research Institutes and Development Departments with support from international agencies have led to the evolution of useful techniques and information on agronomic practices, appropriate choice of crops and their varieties and cropping systems. With time, greater area coverage under high yielding varieties receiving relatively more amount of nutrients have contributed to the rise in the productivity of rainfed crops. No doubt, the rate in growth of productivity continues to lag behind that observed in irrigated areas. More importantly, the yield gap between the research stations and farmers' fields continues to be very wide. Persistence of a wide yield-gap despite sixty years of research and development efforts, has taught us the following lessons.

- The research farm programmes have mostly been scientist-oriented and not farmer- or user-centred. These were perceived, planned, implemented, supervised and evaluated by scientists. The transfer of results followed a top-down approach. In this 'take it or leave it approach', the farmer was at best a passive participant. Scientific findings which became the so-called 'technologies' were born from small plots and short-term research and were invariably not associated with critical cost-benefit studies.
- Acceptance of improved technologies was largely co-terminus with the period of financial support. The moment financial support was withdrawn, farmers reverted to their traditional practices or adopted only some selected components of technologies. A total package constituting an integrated technology was rarely adopted. Risk aversion rather than production and profit enhancement is the major goal of resource-poor farmers. To adopt new technologies they have to take loans either through the formal credit system or through village money-lenders. If they are unable to repay the loan due to

crop failure, they get excluded from the credit system. Hence, they **prefer risk-minimizing agronomy.**

- Acceptance of certain components of technologies did lead to a moderate increase in productivity, but emphasis on employment generation was lacking. Consequently, male out-migration in search of jobs continues to be a serious problem. In a majority of the instances the introduced technologies did not suit the women who primarily manage the fields in the absence of male members. This glaring neglect of gender issues has seriously affected the success of **rainfed projects.**
- The absence of a farming system perspective which takes into account the rural energy or fuel needs for households and forage needs for farmers' animal support system affected the sustainability of the programmes and long-term acceptance.
- Watershed programmes, whether funded from internal or external resources, were labelled as government programmes, with minimal involvement and empowerment of farmers in planning and implementation. Despite the fact that a watershed is owned by many farm families, soil and water conservation approaches did not emphasize community approach and group action on sharing water resources. Pani Panchayats of this type fostered in Maharashtra did **not become a mass movement.**

Based on these lessons and taking into account the emergence of grass-root democratic institutions we can now design programmes which are more likely to meet with sustained success.

PANCHAYAT CENTRED ECO-DEVELOPMENT MISSION FOR RAINFED AGRICULTURE

Rainfed agriculture to be productive, should be based on a watershed as the unit of development. Watershed is not a technology but a concept which integrates conservation, management and budgeting of rain water through simple but discrete hydrological units. Simultaneously, a watershed supports a holistic framework which means a combined application of technologies on soil and water conservation with improved crop varieties, farming systems and agronomic management, taking into account both arable and non-farm land.

Although low gains in a majority of the watershed programmes continue to be a matter of concern, success of watersheds like Rale Gaon Sidhi (Maharashtra) and Sukkomajri (near Chandigarh) has attracted nationwide attention. Future development of rainfed agriculture can draw some valuable lessons from these success stories. It was the total development of the ecosystem in a mission-mode format that formed the hallmark of success. Efficient rain water harvesting and management and equity in water-sharing

formed the nucleus of watershed development. With water availability assured, farmers get motivated to accept more profitable, sustainable and innovative farming systems. Water availability has also catalyzed the adoption and spread of value-added arable technologies in the entire area of the watershed, such as horticulture. A major reason for the success of project executed by several non-governmental agencies is the co-operative effort generated among the members of the Watershed Community. Stakeholder participation and control are vital for promoting efficiency in water harvesting and gender and social equity in water-sharing.

Integrating the watershed development programme with the village development plan to be executed by the Panchayat will be an effective method of ensuring peoples' participation and the sustainable and equitable use of water. In villages where there are several watersheds, an integrated master plan for watershed management could be developed. Also, cropping systems need to be tailored to suit different rainfall-cum-soil zones, as indicated below.

- a. High rainfall areas (mean annual rainfall 1000 mm): Soybean will be a suitable crop. Specific efforts should be instituted to realize the full potential of the crop in the high rainfall, black soil region. Apart from marketing network and ensuring necessary inputs, the emphasis of the mission should be to achieve two crops a year through selective mechanization and drainage of low-lying areas.
- b. Medium rainfall regions (mean annual rainfall 750–1000 mm): Cotton could be given high emphasis in this region. Depending upon the soil and the length of the growing season a suitable intercrop could be introduced to increase the overall profitability of the system. A Cotton Technology Mission can be initiated in such areas.
- c. Low rainfall regions (mean annual rainfall 750 mm): Pulses will be ideal. Farmers should be allowed to process the pulses into dal. In order to improve the availability of seeds of new varieties of pulses, including hybrid arhar (pigeon pea), Seed Villages could be organized in such areas. Due to lower relative humidity, the incidence of pests and diseases is relatively low during the non-rainy season.

Thus a lead crop could be identified for each major rainfall-cum-soil zone. In every case, the Panchayat-led watershed management system should have the following goals:

- conservation of water, enhancement of supply and management of demand
- sustainable and efficient use
- equitable sharing of benefits
- value-addition to water by cultivating high value but low water-requiring crops

A Government of India Commission on Agricultural Extension in Andhra Pradesh (1957) asked the following question: 'Has the Government of such a Pradesh ascertained the deep-seated causes responsible for triggering rapid agricultural progress in some areas, for applying the same for stepping up agricultural production throughout the State, to help food self-sufficiency and surplus production?'.

Over time, changes in crop production in coastal watersheds, Harijans and Pariahs who grow crops and fish, and fishing agriculture to a large extent, has become pre-emptive. A number of factors have combined to speed up intensification of the coastal watersheds. For instance, after 1950, there was a major shift in cropping patterns. It was found that rice cultivation was replacing sorghum and pearl millet in Harijans and Pariahs in Tamil Nadu. Likewise the increased rice cultivation was at the expense of chickpea and barley in Harijans and Pariahs in Andhra Pradesh. The crops that were replaced were normally grown in the coastal lands, thus losing crop barriers to combat leishmaniasis. The following points, identified in production were broadly identified to be:

- increase in the incidence of diseases and insect pests
- deterioration in soil health
- adverse changes in water resource and supply
- non-availability of desired seed at the desired time
- unbalanced use of fertilizers
- micronutrient deficiencies
- weeds

Just prior to Independence, undivided India witnessed one of the most serious famines of this century – the great Bengal famine. Gandhiji speaking in Noakhali in 1946 said, 'to the hungry God is bread and it is the duty of Independent India to ensure that every individual is enabled to earn his or her daily bread'. Gandhiji's emphasis was on 'food for all with human dignity'. He did not want a nation of beggars or the entitlement to food being considered a charity. Thus, he asked us to desist from adopting a patronage approach towards the poor and hungry. Our first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, responded to this call and announced in 1948 that 'everything else can wait but not agriculture'.

We are now in the fiftieth year of our independence. According to official statistics, about 200 million children, women and men will go to bed undernourished tonight. We have however successfully avoided famines during the last fifty years through a multipronged strategy consisting of (a) increased food production, (b) building grain reserves, (c) operating an extensive public distribution system, (d) protective social security measures like food for work, nutritious noon meal and employment guarantee, and (e) land reform and asset creation measures. The continued persistence of

endemic hunger is now largely the result of inadequate purchasing power arising from inadequate opportunities for skilled employment.

Famines were frequent towards the last part of the nineteenth century when the combined population of India, Bangladesh and Pakistan was only 290 million. Our population alone is now more than thrice this number. Hence, we have every reason to be proud of the spectacular success of our government's famine avoidance and containment strategy. The time is now ripe to take the final steps essential for the total elimination of hunger. Hunger elimination is easier to achieve than the eradication of extreme deprivation. The poor spend a large share of their daily income on food and hence the elimination of hunger is the first step towards the alleviation of poverty. The opportunity for a productive and healthy life for every individual depends very much on the success of our hunger elimination strategy. The following seven-point freedom from hunger programme developed in Tamil Nadu needs to become a national one.

1. Identification of the ultra poor by the village/urban communities.
2. Information empowerment through a Household Entitlement Card containing information on the Government programmes available to the family differentiated according to gender and age.
3. Eliminating protein-calorie undernutrition through improving the delivery of the public distribution system.
4. Eliminating silent hunger arising from micro-nutrient deficiencies through the identification of the missing elements in the diet and ensuring their intake through the most feasible methods.
5. Improving the biological absorption and retention of food through the provision of safe drinking water and improved environmental hygiene.
6. Improving the purchasing power of the ultra poor through economically viable micro-enterprises supported by micro-credit.
7. Ensuring that the special programmes intended for women and children reach the unreached, particularly those relating to work opportunities, reproductive health and the reduction of infant mortality rate.

TOWARDS AN EVERGREEN REVOLUTION IN AGRICULTURE

The term Green Revolution was coined by Dr William Gadd of USA in 1968, when our farmers brought about a quantum jump in wheat production by taking to semi-dwarf, non-lodging varieties with great enthusiasm and when similar progress appeared feasible in rice. Punjab took the lead because of the scientific and educational backing given by the Punjab Agricultural University on the one hand, and on the other, by the presence of the essential prerequisites for progress such as land consolidation and levelling, rural communication, rural electrification and above all, owner cultivation.

Thirty years after the term 'Green Revolution' was coined, we are in a position to draw a balance sheet and chalk out a strategy for the future. Apart from erasing the beggar-bow image of India, the most important gain has been the saving of forests and land, thanks to the productivity improvement associated with high yielding varieties. This year, Indian farmers harvested about 68 million tonnes of wheat as compared to 6 million tonnes at the time of Independence in 1947. Punjab farmers have raised the average yield of wheat to over 40 quintals per hectare. Likewise, Tamil Nadu farmers have raised the average yield of rice to over 50 quintals per hectare. If the yield improvement associated with the Green Revolution in wheat and rice had not taken place, we would need another 80 million hectares to produce the wheat and rice we now harvest. Thus, the productivity improvement associated with the Green Revolution is best described as forest- and land-saving agriculture. Such productivity improvement has taken place not only in wheat and rice but also in relation to milk, eggs and fish. But we are lagging behind in the case of pulses.

The population of India is growing at the rate of 1.8 per cent per year. If this trend continues, our population will double itself in less than forty years. Only Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Goa and Mizoram have so far achieved a demographic transition to low birth and death rates. Andhra Pradesh is now on the verge of achieving the goal of population stabilization. Besides population increase, improved purchasing power among the poor will enhance the demand for food, since under-nutrition and poverty go together. In contrast, the per capita availability of arable land is shrinking. Water-use efficiency is still on the whole low and water disputes are growing. In addition to the gradual decline in per capita availability of arable land and irrigation water, various forms of economic constraints are spreading. There is still a widespread mismatch between production and post-harvest technologies. In perishable commodities like fruits, vegetables, flowers, meat and other animal products, this mismatch is often severe, affecting the interests of both producers and consumers.

The transition from a 'ship to mouth' existence to one of food self-sufficiency at the prevailing level of purchasing power achieved during the last fifty years is perhaps one of the greatest human accomplishments since the dawn of agriculture 10,000 years ago. Such a transition was achieved through integrated packages of technology, services and public policies.

Among public policy decisions, an important one relates to investment on irrigation. Consequently, the gross irrigated area increased from 22.6 million hectares in 1950-1 to 66.1 million hectares in 1992-3. Much of the new irrigated area went to wheat and rice. Consequently, the contribution of wheat and rice to the increase in total food production from 42.4 million tonnes in 1950 to over 190 million tonnes now, has been of the order of about 90 per cent. Crops like jowar, bajra and minor millets contributed only 5.5 per cent to the increase in food production. The production of pulses has

been practically stagnant and in per capita terms, the availability of pulses has been going down. Pulses and millets are mostly grown without irrigation. Out of every 3 hectares of cultivated land in our country, two hectares are under rainfed agriculture, the total dryland area being 92.2 million hectares out of a net cultivated area of 142.2 million hectares. Even by the year 2013, when our irrigation potential is likely to be fully developed, farming on one out of every two hectares will continue to rely upon rainfall for survival and success. Therefore, a very high priority should go in the coming years to improving the productivity and stability of rainfed agriculture.

Rainfed areas generally receive an annual rainfall ranging between 500 and 1200 mm. If farm families living in a watershed work together, rain water harvesting and management can be done in an efficient manner. If Panchayati Raj institutions give high priority to promoting community systems of water harvesting and sharing, we can improve the productivity of rainfed farming systems very considerably. Unless there is equity in sharing water, there will be little co-operation in saving water. Rainfed farming technologies are site-specific and this is why planning and action have to be at the local level.

A major accomplishment of Independent India is the development of a dynamic national agricultural research and education system. We have a well-established network of State Agricultural and Animal Sciences Universities and national research institutions and All India Coordinated Research Projects supported by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. Therefore, we have opportunities to produce food and other agricultural commodities, particularly fruits and vegetables, not only for our country but also for international markets. Our opportunities for exports will be particularly great if industrialized countries reduce agricultural subsidies, thereby providing opportunities for developing countries to become cost-competitive in their agricultural exports.

Industrial countries are responsible for much of the global environmental problems such as potential changes in temperature, precipitation, sea level and incidence of ultraviolet-B radiation. While further agricultural intensification in industrialized countries will be ecologically disastrous, the failure to achieve agricultural intensification and diversification in our country where farming provides most of the jobs will be socially disastrous. Agriculture including crop and animal husbandry, forestry and agro forestry, fisheries and agro-industries provides livelihood to over 70 per cent of our population. The smaller the farm, the greater is the need for higher marketable surplus for increasing income. Eleven million new livelihoods will have to be created every year in India and these have to come largely from the farm- and rural-industries sectors. Importing food and other agricultural commodities will hence have the same impact as importing unemployment. Thus, what we need now is an environmentally sustainable and socially equitable green revolution or what may be termed an evergreen revolution.

Those who advocate going back to the old methods of farming ignore the fact that just over half a century ago when the population of independent India was 290 million, farmers claimed 30 million acres between 1800 and 1900.

While families have been prevented, widespread under-nutrition prevails among the economically underprivileged. Since non food factors like health care, environment, hygiene and literacy play an important role in promoting sustainable food security at the level of the individual, we should redefine **food security**.

An operational definition will involve:

- that every individual has physical, economic, social and environmental access to a balanced diet that includes the necessary macro- and micro-nutrients, safe drinking water, sanitation, environmental hygiene, **primary** health care, and education so as to lead a healthy and **productive life**.
- that food originates from efficient and environmentally benign production technologies that conserve and enhance the natural resource base of crops, animal husbandry, forestry, inland and marine fisheries.

The opportunities for Indian agriculture to become a dynamic engine of economic growth and employment generation are great, thanks to the excellent scientific and developmental infrastructure we have created during the last fifty years. However, the challenges are equally great. Our country has today 16 per cent of the world's human population, 15 per cent of the world's livestock, but only 2 per cent of the world's geographical area, 1 per cent of rainwater, 1 per cent of forest and 0.5 per cent of the pasture land. Consequently, the stress on the population supporting capacity of natural ecosystems is very great. Current estimates on land degradation show that around 60 per cent of our geographical area suffers from soil erosion, water logging and salinity. The biological potential of the soil of such degraded lands needs to be upgraded through scientific methods. The Government of India has organized a national wasteland development programme for this purpose.

Two-thirds of the total 450 million heads of livestock thrive in rainfed regions. Rainfed areas can produce a wide range of fruits and animal products. We also have over 7500 km of coast line and about 2.1 million sq. km. of exclusive economic zone in the oceans. To both overcome constraints and capitalize on opportunities, we have to go back to Gandhiji's recipe of Gram Swaraj and production by masses. The onset of democratic decentralization and the information age provides uncommon opportunities for India to become not only food secure but a major global agricultural power. The legacy of the past fifty years gives us confidence that our farm women and men will overcome difficulties and capitalize on opportunities and help the country to realize Gandhiji's vision of a hunger-free India in the early part of the coming millennium.

It is thus clear that we need to pay greater attention to the agronomic management aspects of farming if the green revolution is to remain evergreen.

Our agriculture is now at the crossroads. We can be proud of the fact that during the last few decades, our farmers and scientists have helped the nation to achieve a high degree of self-reliance in our food requirements. Our ability to continue to adopt an independent foreign policy will very much depend upon our ability to maintain food security. Therefore, both the livelihood security of our people and our political independence in relation to foreign affairs would depend very much on the sustained growth of the farm sectors. Unfortunately, there are many negative trends today in the farm scene. A few of these are indicated below.

1. *Infrastructure* in relation to post-harvest technology, including rural communication, godowns, refrigerated storage and transportation arrangements for perishable commodities, is very inadequate. The World Trade Agreement stipulates stringent requirements of sanitary and phytosanitary measures. This is yet to receive attention. Institutional infrastructure is also poor. We need to confer on small farmers the power of scale in processing and marketing as has been done in the dairy sector by the National Dairy Development Board. The National Horticultural Development Board established in 1982 on the recommendation of the Swaminathan Committee is yet to play a dynamic and purposeful role in helping our farmers to derive economic benefit from our vast horticulture potential.
2. *Irrigation*: Advanced countries are making rapid progress in improving yield per drop of water. During the last 30 years, farmers in countries like Israel have gradually shifted from flow irrigation to sprinkler, drip and now membrane irrigation. Plant scale agronomy is replacing field scale agronomy. We must promote precision-farming techniques.
3. Imbalances between rainfed and irrigated areas as well as different regions of the country require attention. There is scope to double the average yield in dry-farming areas with the technologies now on the shelf.
4. *Industry* should promote contract farming rather than corporate farming. Industrial houses should provide services in their command areas. They should undertake contract cultivation on the basis of buy-back arrangements at a remunerative price.
5. *Intellectual Property Rights*: We must address this issue immediately. In 1999, provisions relating to Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) of the World Trade Agreement will come up for review. We should enact both the Plant Variety Protection and Farmers Rights Act as well as Biodiversity Act without further delay and prepare ourselves for the 1999 TRIPS review.
6. *Information*: Our farmers need more services than subsidies. An area

when monsoon fails. It is not only the crop, but also crop-worthiness at harvest. In such an event, the farmer should be able to dispose of the crop, through a fair market and marketing Commission, and a system of indemnity should be developed under the ambit of the crop insurance, to be extended to resource-poor farm families.

Implementation. Confronted the problem does not lie with policy but with the implementation mechanism. During the last fifty years, we have developed numerous vertically structured programmes. The time has come to add the horizontal dimension.

MONSOON MANAGEMENT

We have been fortunate to have had a series of normal south west monsoons during the last ten years. It is hoped that this year's monsoon will also be satisfactory. The last serious droughts were in 1979-80 and 1986-7. During 1979-80, when I was the Principal Secretary of the Union Ministry of Agriculture, an integrated Monsoon Management strategy was developed consisting of the following major elements.

First, establish in every district a Crop-Weather Watch Group consisting of climatologists, farm scientists, representatives of farmers' and women's organizations, concerned officers of government and representatives of financial institutions and mass media. The tasks to be addressed by such a group include monitoring monsoon progression, development of contingency plans and alternative cropping strategies to suit different weather probabilities, building seed reserves of alternate crops and intensifying efforts in the area of water harvesting and minor irrigation. The aim is both to maximize the beneficial impact of a good monsoon on agricultural productivity and minimize the adverse impact of aberrant rainfall through efficient water saving and use, crop life-saving practices and contingency land-use plans.

Second, demarcate in each district the most favourable areas (MFA) from the point of view of intensifying agricultural production through appropriate public policies and investment, particularly in minor irrigation and water management. MFAs are those where the moisture retention capacity of the soil is high and where irrigation facilities are either available or can be created. Compensatory production programmes designed to offset to the extent possible crop losses in the drought or flood-affected areas, can be introduced in MFAs.

Third, develop strategies for introducing effective relief and rehabilitation measures in the areas most seriously affected (MSA) either by drought or floods. In chronically drought-prone areas, such measures should include earmarking community land for establishing cattle camps to save the lives of farm animals and identifying aquifers which can be conserved as 'ground-water sanctuaries' for being tapped for the supply of drinking water only when absolutely essential.

The above three-pronged strategy will help to minimize both human suffering and crop losses when monsoon behaviour is abnormal and results in drought or floods. The Rural Godown Scheme, also introduced in 1979, was designed to promote the decentralized storage of harvested produce, so as to prevent distress sales by farmers when the harvest is good and panic purchase by consumers when crop losses are high.

The Indian Meteorological Department is now in a position to make fairly accurate long- and medium-term weather forecasting. Our electronic communication network, including radio and television is now very extensive. The emergence of grass-root democratic institutions, with one-third representation to women provides unique opportunities for improving the productivity and stability of dry farming areas, which constitute nearly 60 per cent of the cultivated areas, through group endeavour in water saving and sharing. We should train in each village panchayat at least one male and one female member in the science and art of monsoon management. Such trained members can be designated 'Climate Managers'. Wherever possible, the concerned Agricultural University or ICAR Research Institute should provide such village-level Climate Managers information derived from computer simulation models, so as to help them to be prepared to handle both adequate and aberrant monsoon rainfall.

The need for a micro-level understanding and management of temperature and precipitation is evident from the fact that though the monsoon rains during last year were normal in national terms, the total food grain production decreased by 4 million tonnes due to climatic variations at local level. Micro-level management promotes the use of precision-farming techniques involving plant-scale agronomy rather than just area-based approaches. Plant-scale agronomy is knowledge- and information-intensive and affords opportunities for making farming intellectually stimulating, in addition to being economically rewarding. It is in this field that the panchayat-level Climate Managers can play a valuable role in collaboration with farmers' and women's associations and agricultural extension personnel.

The National Agenda for Governance of the BJP and Alliance Partners states: 'We will earmark 60 per cent of the Plan funds for public investment in agriculture, rural development and irrigation.' It is important that this commitment is converted into programmes which will enable our 100 million farming families to help the country to maintain not only food self-sufficiency, but also political independence.

In the last year of his life, Mahatma Gandhi often stressed that the first and foremost duty of Independent India is to create an enabling environment where every citizen can earn his or her daily bread. Food insecurity at the level of the individual today is more due to a famine of jobs and purchasing power, rather than due to a shortage of food in the market. The National Agenda for Governance commits itself to 'give to the entire national development efforts a human face with total eradication of poverty as the ultimate

goal. For this *Berozgarī Hatao* — eradicate unemployment — is our call.' It is clear that a high percentage of new livelihood opportunities has to come from agricultural and agro-industries sectors. This again stresses the urgency for according on-farm and off-farm employment high priority. This in turn will call for greater investment in water conservation and sustainable use, post-harvest technology and rural roads and markets.

El Nino reminds us of the weather phenomena beyond our control and of the need to be prepared to face different contingencies. Pokhran teaches us that given a right blend of political will and scientific skill, seemingly impossible tasks can be achieved. What is now needed is the translation of these lessons in the field of agriculture resulting in the professionalization of agricultural planning and action at all levels, starting with the village Panchayat. If this is done, the old saying that 'Indian agriculture is a gamble in the monsoon' can be replaced by the saying 'India's agricultural strength lies in its ability to manage the monsoons'.

An area which will need much attention in the coming years, is the maintenance of yield of crops at high levels. A fact-finding committee constituted by the ICAR to study the causes for the decline in crop productivity in Haryana and Punjab (Sinha et al, 1998) has made several useful recommendations for keeping the green revolution in these states, evergreen. The committee has recommended steps to maintain soil health and to reduce pest epidemics through appropriate crop rotations. We need similar studies in every part of the country to ensure the long-term environmental sustainability of high yield technologies.

There is thus no time to relax. Eternal vigilance is the price of productive agriculture.

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Industry: From Regulation to Liberalization

Nineteen forty-seven to 1997, a fifty-year period, is an appropriate time frame for review and stocktaking of India's industrial development process. In India's case, it also happens to be the first fifty years of national development after Independence. At the time of Independence, India was among the few colonial economies that had an industrial and manufacturing sector. There were, in existence, industries such as steel, cement, textiles, sugar, paper board, light consumer goods and a range of engineering industries. Compared to other newly-independent countries, urban India was also better off in terms of industrial infrastructure, institutional facilities and networks, facilities for higher learning and scientific and technological research. There was also a network of financial systems, consisting of commercial banks and a capital market.

However, both industrial activity and urban centres were limited and concentrated. The overall industrial economy was not large enough to meet the needs of the economy as a whole. Infrastructure was inadequate and lacking in most areas. The base did exist, but was not strong enough for the superstructure that was needed in the future. Besides, there was the huge task of achieving faster growth of an economy with high incidences of under-development and poverty. Rapid industrialization was naturally the need of the day to generate economic growth and employment.

An industry-driven development strategy was, therefore, considered appropriate for rapid economic development and, accordingly, from the early 1950s, strategies for industrialization received considerable attention. Beginning with Independence in 1947, and up to the end of the First Five Year Plan in 1955-6, the focus was on consolidation, while framing the broad contours of policy and regulation. The need was felt for putting in place some regulatory mechanism for planned development and to establish supporting institutions.

Towards this objective certain important initiatives were taken during the period 1947-55, namely the enactment of Capital Control (Issues) Act 1947, Factories Act 1948, Minimum Wages Act 1947, and so on. With a view to augmenting capital resources for investment, and particularly developments in finance, at the all-India level, the Industrial Finance Corporation was set up in 1948 and, at the state level, the State Financial Corporation Act was enacted to enable state governments to set up their own financial institutions.

One of the principal goals of development strategy was to promote the growth of indigenous industries through import substitution measures. Besides, a shortage of foreign exchange resources had also necessitated stricter import trade control. At the same time, the need for export promotion through a diversification of the export basket was realized. In order to meet these objectives, the Import Trade Control Act was passed in 1947, and the Export Trade (Control) Order 1955 was introduced. However, the basic philosophy of that industrialization that was to come was spelt out in the Industrial Policy Resolution of 1948 (IPR'48), that specified the role of government in future industrial development and earmarked the scope for private sector investment.

After the IPR'48 came the Industries (Development & Regulation) (IDR) Act 1951 with a view to imposing licensing control on investment and production. The objectives behind this act were threefold, namely:

- (i) to ensure efficient allocation of available resources,
- (ii) to channelize investment in the desired directions, and
- (ii) to curb the concentration of economic power in the hands of a few.

As a promotional measure, the Office of the Director General of Technical Development (DGTD) was set up to encourage technology upgradation and channelize the induction of appropriate technology. Under the DGTD, several industry-specific Development Councils were created to monitor the growth of those industries.

Nineteen hundred and fifty-six was a landmark year in the history of post-Independence industrialization strategy. The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956 was announced with clearcut guidelines on the role of different sectors in India's industrialization drive, with the commanding height occupied by the public sector. While establishment of a mixed economy and 'growth with equity' were the primary objectives, there was a major assumption about the efficacy of the private sector. It was assumed that the private sector had limited skills and resources to invest in infrastructure and basic industries that constituted the backbone of an industrial economy. Accordingly, the sphere of large private sector units was restricted to a limited list of areas which were specified in Appendix I of the IDR Act 1951. The Second Five Year Plan set the tone of industrialization strategy with its focus on the rapid development of infrastructure and heavy industries. While the public sector had to focus on the development of infrastructure and core industries, the private sector could concentrate on the development of consumer goods industries, for which an elaborate scheme was worked out through a mix of trade and fiscal policies.

The government, however, did not stop at that. Having given the leading role of guiding India's future industrialization to the public sector, it had also felt concerned about the concentration of economic power. Various studies and committees were instituted to examine the effectiveness of the IDR Act.

and it was established that the licensing regime did not result in diffusion of economic power. Following this, several amendments were introduced to the IDR act with a view to tightening licensing control. The Secretariat for Industrial Approvals was set up to scrutinize investment proposals. Most important was the enactment of the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices (MRTP) Act in 1969 with the sole objective of controlling monopolies and large industrial houses, who were denied expansion/ extension of capacity and even additional investment required for modernization.

THE MOST DIFFICULT PERIOD

Nineteen hundred and sixty-nine to 1974 was the most difficult period for India's private sector. Besides the MRTP Act 1969, the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA) was introduced in 1973. The objective was to ensure the effective and desired allocation of scarce foreign exchange and prevent misuse and draining out. It was also used to curb the growth opportunities of foreign companies, who were asked to dilute their equities to 40 per cent or less. It was following this that some of the erstwhile multinationals chose to wind up their Indian operations. Those who did not, had diluted their equities to 40 per cent or less to become Indian companies.

Beginning 1970, the government had also initiated the nationalization of many private companies, irrespective of the sectors they belonged to. In addition, coal, some heavy engineering industries, banking and insurance and several consumer goods industries such as textiles, bicycles, and so on were nationalized. Following this, the government also sought to restrict the scope of the private sector by making direct investment in the consumer goods industry. Some of the nationalization flowed from government policy and some from the objective of a revival of sick industries.

The Second Five Year Plan as well as the Third led to a huge balance-of-payment crisis. There was a major economic crisis in the 1960s as a result. The political environment also had considerable effect on future economic policies. As populism became the order of the day in politics, central investment policies came to be influenced by this trend, and the public sector was found a convenient tool for propagating a spirit of economic populism.

The political process seriously affected not only economic policies but even the implementation of Plan projects where implementation was delayed. All this had its impact on the performance of the industrial sector since the mid 1960s. It was, therefore, not surprising that there was a long period of industrial stagnation (1965–80). Providential and circumstantial forces were not kind either. There was a major drought in the mid 1960s, and a food crisis subsequent to that. Two wars with Pakistan and then the oil crisis also dealt a severe blow, with a debilitating impact on the fundamentals of the macro economy. There was an acute resource crisis throughout. Tax rates were raised to such high levels that no further increase was possible.

To sum up the situation till 1980, one can say that India had made a good beginning toward industrialization. The conceptual and theoretical backdrops to the various regulatory measures were almost perfect. But down the years, these perspectives were lost. Within less than two decades from the beginning, the industrial economy was bogged in a severe state of stagnation. Instead of reaching the take-off stage, Indian development was restricted to low rates of growth in the national economy and industry. All the ailments of Indian industry that we are concerned about today have their origin in this period, to be precise during 1965–74. These include high cost, high incidence of duties and levies, uncompetitive private and public sectors, delay in project implementation, bureaucratic delays, fragmented industrial structure and so on.

There was yet another significant development that took place during the period on policy with respect to the small-scale sector. The policy of reservation for exclusive production in the small-scale sector was introduced in 1967 when only eight items were reserved, and subsequently the items reserved for the small-scale sector were significantly increased. Again, the stated objectives were laudable. One of these was to encourage the growth of entrepreneurship and motivate people toward self-sufficiency on the entrepreneurial route. Another was to ensure the spread of industrial activities across the states and regions, so that there was a geographical balance in industrialization. Also, it was thought that this would help in the development of ancillarization and sub-contracting leading to interdependence among large, medium and small-scale sectors on the one hand and between the public and private sectors on the other. But the implementation of the policy was directed in a different way and most often this policy was used to curb the growth of large industrial enterprises. In fact, this was one of the major reasons for the neglect of modernization and technology upgradation in the large-scale private sector, where no capacity expansion and no new investment were allowed on the grounds that the products concerned were reserved for the small-scale sector.

WINDS OF CHANGE

There was a welcome shift in the thought processes of policy-makers during 1974–84. The need for liberalization was felt in 1974, when some minor steps were taken to allow large enterprises to undertake some modernization. In 1977, the first non-Congress government at the centre introduced an Industrial Policy Statement that did talk about further strengthening the role of the public sector but also underlined the need for improving the efficiency of such units. At the same time, it had also recognized the need for giving greater freedom of operation to small-scale enterprises and underlined the need for a larger industrial spread through the development of a nucleus of enterprises at the village level. But this was short-lived. It was also at that

time — in the late 1970s — that the thought of liberalizing the trade policy with the objective of facilitating technology upgradation and the creation of export capacity came up for debate.

On coming back to power, the Congress government came out with its own Industrial Policy Statement of 1980. Like the earlier policy statement of 1977, this new statement also re-emphasized the role of the public sector, but for the first time the negative attitude towards large private-sector units was in the process of dilution, following a number of industrial policy notifications giving more freedom to large enterprises.

In view of the severe balance-of-payments crisis of the late 1970s, there was a remarkable shift in the thrust of industrial policy toward the creation of export production facilities. Export production was practically delicensed and several export processing zones were set up to create exclusive enclaves for export production. Alongside this, import policies were subjected to phased liberalization, the key feature of which was a gradual expansion of the list of items under OGL imports and duty-free import facility for export production.

The measures introduced during the period (1974–84) were not significant enough, but went a long way in increasing industrial production and also changing the composition of exports in favour of manufactured items. It did help the industrial economy to come out of the prolonged stagnation it was subjected to. Also, during this period one could see the emergence of certain new industries, adding further depth and dimension to India's diversified manufacturing base. Among others, this period witnessed the emergence of petro-chemical sectors and its downstream industries, the electronics industry, and the automobile industry to some extent.

The beginning of the current industrial and economic policy could be seen with the launching of the Seventh Five Year Plan in 1985 when the prime minister urged the country to look forward to the twenty-first century and underlined the imperative of building a globally competitive industrial economy. The government also encouraged the growth of new technology-intensive industries with a view to bridging the technology gap that was allowed to widen all these years. The period from 1985 to 1988 was extremely significant from the point of view of the liberalization of industrial policy. A series of policy measures were taken to deregulate and decontrol investment and production. The measures were aimed at creating new capacities as well as expanding the existing ones through modernization. Unfortunately, the process of liberalization could not be continued. Political turmoil had engulfed the country while the economy was sliding dangerously into a crisis of unprecedented dimensions. The severe macro-economic difficulties which overtook it by the end of the 1980s culminated in a major crisis in 1991.

At least for the industrial economy, however, this crisis had little to do with liberalization. The need for liberalizing the industrial policy and giving private enterprises a leading role in shaping the economic destiny of the

country was felt earlier than the 1991 reform. There was little disagreement on this issue. There was also hardly any disagreement that the public sector was in need of reform and, by the end of the 1980s, there was a general agreement that it could not continue to be given the position of the commanding height, though it need not be dispensed with. The disagreement, if at all, had pertained to the role of foreign capital and the extent to which foreign enterprises should be allowed to participate. Even here, there was an agreement on the need to look afresh at the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy and adopting a more flexible approach. In other words, the following changes took place with respect to our understanding about the future direction of industrialization:

- the public sector could not be the sole engine of growth
- the private sector had to take this responsibility as well
- FDI had a positive role to play in shaping the future of India's industrial economy, and
- Indian industry must be made competitive in the domestic as well as the international markets.

Beginning 1991, the process of liberalization started in 1985 has been hastened. There is hardly any licensing control on investment and production. Foreign investment policy has been liberalized to fit into an internationally comparable framework. The sphere of the public sector has not been expanded, and a disinvestment process has been initiated as a step toward privatization. More pragmatic policies have been introduced with respect to the small-scale sector so as to ensure that investment limits do not come in the way of building linkages and technology upgradation. Trade policy, which is an integral supporting policy for industrialization, has been liberalized with a view to inducting external competition and facilitate competitiveness. The private sector has been invited to play a role in infrastructure development, and policy measures have been introduced to enable Indian industry to operate globally and invest overseas.

A NEW CLIMATE

All this has brought about a new climate of growth and competitiveness in India's industrial economy. Currently, Indian industry is undergoing a major restructuring exercise faced with a competitive environment. But the fact is that Indian industry has a lot of ground to cover. It is, therefore, imperative that the transition phase is adequately managed and guided to ensure that the basic objectives of liberalization, namely globalization and competitiveness of Indian industry, are realized. This calls for careful policy planning, efficient economic administration at all levels of governance and the creation of an enabling environment.

Indian industry will have to respond to the challenges of competition at

home and also face greater competition in the global marketplace. Internal reorganization, the induction of professionalism in management practices, the development and utilization of manpower, technology upgradation, the effective management of industrial relations and, overall, a new paradigm of corporate management are some of the hitherto neglected areas that need attention. At the same time, in order to facilitate efficiency at the micro-level of operations, there is a need for broadening as well as deepening economic reform, penetrating all layers of administration. Given this, India can enter a new era of industrialization that will place it firmly as a major industrial power in the twenty-first century world economy.

To conclude, a successful globalization of Indian industry will much depend on how the future industrial policy is directed. The contours of industrial policy have changed. Industrial development, and particularly competitiveness, is no longer a matter of a typical industrial policy that relates to investment, production, distribution and pricing. It has to be viewed in the overall context of macro-economic policy in all its dimensions. An effective macro-economic policy, with in-built flexibility and an adjustment mechanism, has a great bearing on industrial competitiveness. There is, accordingly, a need for a more comprehensive and flexible policy approach.

Economic administration also has an equally important role to play. It has to be responsive, flexible and forward-looking. This underlines the need for reforms at various levels of the administration. Another imperative is building efficient infrastructure, and this is an area where the role of government is still considered very important while the private sector provides supplementary initiatives. Infrastructure must be supportive not only of production but also consumption. Last but not the least, there is an urgent need to improve the law-and-order situation in the country. A law and order situation conducive to efficiency and competitiveness is too obvious to need any elaboration.

India has now emerged, after fifty years, as a nation with the potential to be a major economic power of the world, thanks to its human and natural resources. Indian industry is already at a globally competitive standard in a number of sectors, such as textiles, software, gems and jewellery, and automotive components. It is therefore transiting from a highly sheltered, protected environment to a globally competitive industrial scenario, based on interdependence and uncertainty. In spite of the many difficulties experienced in the last fifty years, India's industrialization process has the capability to now stand on a near-equal footing in the global village. The twenty-first century will witness many changes and restructuring but industry in India will continue to play a major part in the development process.

RAJA RAMANNA

Science: New Frontiers and Beyond

As a result of World War II, the whole structure of science and its relation to industry in the West changed from what it was during the previous decades. The War was fought on the basis of using the latest technology against the enemy's capabilities, and several discoveries and inventions which seemed impossible at one time became possible by the concerted efforts of groups of the best scientists in the world. All this has had a tremendous impact on the nature and structure of science and technology in the post-war world. Scientific research, which was earlier carried out on a small scale in university laboratories under a few professors and their students, suddenly changed to a structure where hundreds of scientists were working on applications of the latest discoveries, involving the co-ordinated work of several laboratories. The new structure required a corresponding change of policy of the respective governments and 'science in the large' came into existence.

It was in this background that Indian science, starting from the late 1940s, had to be developed. A proper base had first to be created and this came about because of the overall appreciation of the role of science by the first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. He was convinced that the future of India depended on scientific and technological development and further that it should be based on self-reliance. To carry out such a programme was no easy task, as the old colonial administrative methods were designed against such development, and he had to find the right people with the necessary vision to implement these new policies. Though there were many scientists who had made important contributions to pure science, there was certainly a shortage of those with organizational capacities involving industry. Nehru identified three persons for this purpose: P.C. Mahalanobis, Homi Bhabha and S.S. Bhatnagar. These three scientists shaped post-war Indian science, each in his own way but with different results.

THE THREE ARCHITECTS

The approach of these distinguished scientists naturally depended on their political and social background. Professor P.C. Mahalanobis was a strong Marxist and his approach to planning was based entirely on socialist principles. He founded the Indian Statistical Institute which made important contributions to mathematics, particularly in the field of statistics, in many

of its various centres in India. The important contribution of Mahalanobis was, being a distinguished statistician, that he gave India the correct way to assess its successes and failures. But his over-dependence on the Soviet Model and his somewhat parsimonious attitude towards spending prevented planning from taking the country along the path of generating wealth. We now know that the way to reduce poverty in India is to utilize private capital and resources, especially in a democratic system. However, the Nehruvian creation of the public sector did open up great possibilities, especially at a time when our private sector was weak except for a few firms, and is a contribution that must be greatly praised. There was, however, more emphasis on steel, on large power projects and, somehow, an appropriate structure was not evolved for the public sector to protect it from becoming just a tool in the hands of bureaucrats. At the same time, one must of course mention the positive contributions of organizations like Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL), Hindustan Machine Tools (HMT), Indian Rare Earth (IRE) and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL). Many of these produced vital items **which just could not have been imported.**

Homi Bhabha was a wealthy Parsee who, because of the environment he was brought up in, had a natural feeling for appropriate management which took into account the existing conditions in the country. He was a pragmatic person and his training in engineering, physics and mathematics made it possible for him to start groups, to deal with atomic energy, space, pure mathematics, and physics (later to include biology). With his background of knowledge of the private sector, he was able to create a new flexible management system which is still viable. His early death in a plane crash was a disaster for the development of science in the country.

Homi Bhabha tried to focus his work in one or two fields of development so that there was a greater concentration of effort. The formation of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), even before the end of World War II, gave a tremendous momentum to the new methods of research in India. Though his activities were mostly located in Bombay, he tried to get good people from all parts, particularly the South, especially at a time marked by intellectual discrimination. By his efforts, he was, to a great extent, able to prevent emigration of talented Indian scientists, especially in the early stages of our post-Independence era. The mathematics faculty of the TIFR achieved great heights and most of the achievements belonged to young mathematicians who otherwise would not have found a place due to the system of reservations. The physics faculty attained an international reputation and was visited regularly by great physicists like Blackett, Pauli, Bohr, Dirac and other well-known scientists. Bhabha's own work on cosmic rays and fundamental particles was extended and the theoretical physics department made notable contributions. On the experimental side special mention must be made of the contributions on proton decay experiments deep underground, nuclear magnetic resonance, nuclear fission, nuclear and neutron

physics and the design and construction of accelerators, particularly the Variable Energy Cyclotron at Calcutta under conditions which were unbelievably difficult.

Bhabha's contributions to the development of nuclear reactors is a part of our history. His insistence on self-reliance, even at the most difficult of times when it was just not possible to import items from abroad, was entirely due to his confidence that India will be able to make it alone. In the early stages, while the first nuclear power reactor was imported, to demonstrate to the country that atomic energy is a viable source of power he simultaneously built up a strong research and development complex at Trombay, which has progressively made it possible to build research reactors starting with smaller ones like 'Apsara' and proceeding to larger or more sophisticated and complex ones like 'Dhruva' and 'Purnima'. With this, he was able to put India among the advanced countries in the world. Unfortunately, after his death, international politics began to restrict imports through unfair treaties like the Non-Proliferation Treaty (IRE), Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and so on, and this slowed down the progress of our power reactor programme. Bhabha was a fighter and would never have agreed to any discriminatory order that made it legal for a few countries and their friends to dominate the global atomic power scene. That policy still continues. His most lasting contribution is the encouragement he gave to the development of the fast reactor programme at Kalpakkam to utilize thorium, which is plentiful within the country. Unfortunately, thorium is not a fissile material and has to be converted by a complex process into one. Had he been alive, he would have been very happy to have known the high capacity and availability factors (80 per cent to 90 per cent) we have reached with our own power reactors, as well as the success of our fast reactor development which has supplied power to our grids. But for his early insistence on self-reliance, we would have been destroyed as a nuclear country by all the agreements we would have had to sign — as has happened in neighbouring countries. It is also a good reflection on the capability of our industry which has all along responded superbly to the demands of the entire programme. Had we wished, we could have become a totally nuclear country; but that would not have been consistent with our policy of non-violence and the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction. But we live in a troubled world and scientists have to be always alert.

Professor Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar was a university man, but had during the war many connections with industry. He was an Anglophile and believed in importing British management systems of that period wherever technological development was involved. He was responsible for the creation of a set of wide ranging laboratories controlled by an umbrella organization known as the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). These laboratories were located in various places meant not only to help industry but to also have an impact on the economy of the region.

In the formative days of the CSIR, laboratories were created without special attention as to who would guide them. But wherever suitable distinguished scientists became available, the laboratory prospered. As an example I can refer to the National Chemical Laboratory (NCL), Pune, which has made significant contributions to the chemical industry, particularly the pharmaceutical industry, and through appropriate co-ordination the work of such laboratories has been exploited by industry. Wherever leadership has been weak, the laboratory has drifted to become a regional unit unable to make any strong impact. In recent years, however, through dynamic leadership and co-ordination of all the concerned laboratories, much has been achieved, and the interaction between industry and CSIR is clearly seen. CSIR is still to achieve its maximum potential and this is just the proper moment, as industry has become the most important factor for our economic development.

After the death of Nehru and Bhabha, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi took over, and Vikram Sarabhai was made Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) which then included the space programme. It was during this time that the Thumba Centre was created for launching small space rockets for meteorological purposes and larger programmes were planned. Vikram Sarabhai died suddenly within a few years but the work on space continued and a new Department of Space was created by Indira Gandhi. Our achievements in space have made a tremendous impact on various aspects of our modern technological programmes. They have helped create a capacity to handle computer software which has become one of the largest in the world. Over the last twenty-five years there has been steady progress in the space programme, both in rockets and satellites, and the Geo-Stationary Launch Vehicle (GSLV) will be its crowning glory when it gets going. The overall atmosphere is one of using modern communication systems. Mobile telephones, e-mail, and so on are the order of the day, and the Internet is becoming available in special places particularly in newer libraries.

During the early years of World War II, the British found it fit to start small units, to service damaged war equipment and make small components which would have been difficult to import from the West. It was called the Technical Unit of the Army and this became the nucleus for the present large Production Department of Defence and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). The latter had a slow start under D.S. Kothari who was part-time professor and its head, but in recent years it has become the very focal point of our programme of indigenization of defence.

THE IMPETUS OF WARS

The wars with China and Pakistan gave a great impetus to self-reliance and a series of defence laboratories were created with an eye on the future to manufacture as many items as possible, covering all aspects of conventional

weapons. It is difficult to believe that from these small beginnings the DRDO now produces sophisticated armour plates and electronic gadgets for our latest tanks and is in the forefront in the manufacture of small arms, explosives, both for under and above-water ballistic activities, and so on for all the three services. The most significant of these developments is the manufacture of Prithvi and Agni missiles. Prithvi has a range of 300–500 KMs, and the Agni a range of 2500–2800 KMs.

It is not as though only the distinguished scientists and institutions mentioned above have contributed to scientific growth in India. There have been many more individuals who have contributed to important programmes that have become the backbone of our pure and applied sciences. An old institute, sometimes referred to as the Tata School at Bangalore — whose formal name is The Indian Institute of Science — was founded by the visionary Jamshedji Tata, and started functioning as early as 1909. Surprisingly enough its original aims were to make contributions in the applied fields of chemistry and electrical engineering. The inclusion of the pure sciences occurred at the time of Professor C.V. Raman. It is now a centre for both aspects of knowledge and has made important contributions in the advanced fields of molecular biology, solid state physics, and structural chemistry. The pattern of operation and management may belong to an earlier period but the institute continues to make a satisfactory combination in many fields to be able to help the growth of our industry.

Meteorology and seismology are old fields of research in India, dating back to the late eighteenth century. During the last fifty years through modernization, the spread of meteorological information has opened up new possibilities which have a bearing on the impact of science of direct benefit to the people. The space programme has made meteorological operations more dependable and is worldwide in its applications. It is, however, not yet possible to predict earthquakes nor is it possible to predict the paths of cyclones with quantitative precision as they are very stochastic by nature, but with the help of cloud studies through satellites and by keeping coastal people promptly informed many lives have been saved. It is with all these technologies that it has been possible to set up a meteorological station at Antarctica which certainly has an influence on the countries in and around the Indian Ocean.

Perhaps science's greatest contribution to the country has been the modernization of agriculture. It is surprising that a country whose methods of agriculture were no different to what they were a thousand years ago, and where famines had become a way of life, should absorb modern biochemical technology in a matter of years and become self-sufficient in food. The modern farmer now talks of new seeds, mutants and agrochemicals with a familiarity which is difficult to believe. Of course, these changes are not only due to farmers but as much as to the work of agro-scientists and visionaries like C. Subramaniam who made it their lifework to demonstrate the new

possibilities to a community that had been neglected for centuries. The availability of new mutants through radiation done at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) is beginning to transform certain types of crops like groundnuts and radiation uses have become money spinners to farmers.

The standard of medical practice has reached a very high level in India and has kept pace with developments abroad. In all the bigger cities quality medical assistance is available. Heart and brain operations and transplants have become commonplace and the instrumentation made indigenously for medical practice is constantly improving. However, the same cannot be said for the rural sector, and much remains to be done. Besides, the confusion, caused by the various types of medicines in existence has made medical research take second place with respect to the other branches of science. At the same time, the atomic energy programme has given an impetus of profound value to medical practice and medical research, by making available nearly all the isotopes required for cancer treatment and allied research. Spinal fluid transfers have now become possible and the treatment of cancer in all its aspects at the Tata Memorial Centre at Bombay is of international standards.

One of the very important fall-outs of World War II has been the development of metallurgy. Earlier it was a matter of choosing the designs limited by what was available as metals and materials. After the war, because of newly emerging technologies, various new materials were produced according to requirement. The need for new materials came from the aircraft industry, newer types of weapons, and above all the development of the atomic power industry and space vehicles. In India, the need came out of the quest for self-reliance, particularly in the atomic industry. The production of uranium fuel elements and its cladding by zirconium alloys under the leadership of the late Dr Brahm Prakash was a great achievement. Later, the production of beryllium metal and other metals of high purity put India at an advanced level in the complex technology of materials. The experience in industrial production of nuclear materials led to the indigenous production of other new materials like titanium, tantalum, niobium and several rare earths. It is difficult to list all the materials that have been developed in India but one must mention in passing, quality glasses and electronic materials.

LASERS AND ELECTRON BEAMS

At a stage, it became clear that we should specially devote ourselves to two aspects of the new discoveries which were playing a very important role in all aspects of modern development – lasers and electron beams. For this purpose, a new complex called 'Centre for Advanced Technologies' (CAT) was created at Indore in Madhya Pradesh for the development of laser materials and electron accelerators. Madhya Pradesh, which has played an important historic role in the country, had been neglected in scientific

growth. CAl now produces a wide variety of power lasers and those required for special uses such as fine metal cutting, surgery and isotope separation — to mention only a very few of its uses. In recent years, electron beams (and generally radiation) are being used for a wide variety of purposes such as materials processing, food preservation, sewage treatment and so on, and this has all the advantages of switching off the electron beam when not required — **unlike gamma radiation sources.**

The large spectrum of activities as support to industry has led to various degrees of self-reliance. This has to be emphasized in view of the embargoes initiated by other countries on somewhat flimsy and selfish grounds.

Turning once again to the basic sciences which have always been the measure of the progress of science in India from ancient times — any assessment of India's contributions has to be seen with respect to the progress in these fields all over the world. We start with physics, as it was in this field that the reputation of India was made in the 1920s. With the confirmation that the ultimate structure of matter is not merely protons, neutrons and electrons and that there are innumerable particles, nearly all unstable and one changing to the other, the study of such problems has led to much new physics. Still, it is not clear that the ultimate answers have indeed been found. Quantum mechanics has been able to answer many questions but not without tangling itself with the problem of consistency. The methods to explain the behaviour of fundamental particles seems somewhat artificial. Work on a more fundamental basis on these problems is in progress in India. On the other hand, studies on nuclear fission, both experimental and theoretical, have found great acceptance. Work on solid and liquid state physics, both because of its inherent interest and in view of possible applications, has been **vigorously pursued in India.**

In recent years there has been great interest in understanding the cosmos. Following the results of General Relativity in the work of Einstein, many new plausible conjectures have been made as to the origin of the universe and its subsequent behaviour. This field can be considered the most exciting one in modern physics but it is dependent on the results and conclusions of particle physics and other branches of physics. In order to keep pace with these activities, a complex radio-telescope system was built near Ooty in the 1960s. With the experience gained from its operation, another very large telescope called GMRT is nearing completion near Pune and this is expected to be used to investigate outstanding problems in astrophysics and cosmology, particularly on galaxy formations, fast pulsars and the most distant objects in the universe, quasars. It also has the capability to search for possible **extra-terrestrial intelligence.**

There is no doubt that the greatest mystery of all knowledge lies in the field of molecular biology. In recent years we have learnt much about genetic material, its origin and fantastic behaviour in preserving so much information in such a small area. However, we do not know yet what causes life even in

its most elementary forms and also why its structure is such that death is **in-built** into it.

All these problems are under study in our university laboratories and institutions. Subject to governmental and industrial support, we can await major breakthroughs from Indian scientists.

U. R. RAO

Science and Technology: Impressive Strides

The progressive development of science and technology in India during the last fifty years since Independence truly reflects the continuous saga of a large developing nation struggling to establish an equitable society with an acceptable quality of life within a stable democratic set-up. The scientific progress of post-Independent India can only be fully appreciated when viewed in the background of pre-Independence India. In spite of the long and established tradition in science, astronomy and medicine dating back to great ancient astronomers and mathematicians like Aryabhata, Varahamihira, Sushruta and Bhaskara, India could not take advantage of the second wave of the industrial revolution under two centuries of colonial rule. At the time of Independence, India was primarily a poor agrarian country, totally dependent on foreign sources for all finished industrial goods, even clips and pins, the only exception being some degree of industrialization in textiles and steel. The credit for revitalizing the scientific tradition in the post-Independence era truly belongs to the great statesman Jawaharlal Nehru who firmly believed that 'Science alone could solve the problem of hunger and poverty, insanitation and illiteracy, of superstition and deadening customs and tradition, of vast resources running to waste of a rich country inhabited by starving people.' To Pandit Nehru science was not only a tool for economic development but also a means of emancipation of man, and the scientific temper represented the true religion which alone could lead to the qualitative transformation of a stagnant society. His basic faith in science was concretized through the 1958 science policy resolution: 'It is an inherent obligation of a great country like India with its traditions of scholarship and original thinking, and its great cultural heritage, to participate fully in the march of science, which is probably mankind's greatest enterprise today.'

Just prior to independence, in 1946, India witnessed one of the most devastating famines in the history of the nation, which made Mahatma Gandhi lament 'to the hungry, God is bread.' Given the immensity of poverty, the central anti-poverty strategy had to be based on the creation of gainful employment on a massive scale. Recognizing that accelerated growth alone can lead to poverty alleviation, India adopted planning as a mechanism to initiate rapid and structurally-ordered development with a human face. The first step in our long march toward the elimination of hunger was taken in 1948 by initiating the agricultural revolution, through irrigation schemes, the use of high-yielding genetic varieties and pesticides, and the building of

adequate grain reserves as a buffer against famines. Action was taken to establish a number of specialized national laboratories under the newly formed Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). This has now grown into a large network of forty-five laboratories and eighty field extension centres carrying out industrial research in diverse scientific disciplines dealing with a wide variety of technologies. Steps were initiated to develop heavy machine industries, aeronautical establishments, sophisticated tool-making facilities, chemical industries and electronic enterprises. A Department of Atomic Energy was established under Dr Homi Bhabha to carry out research in nuclear science and technology. A number of rural development programmes were initiated to improve the quality of life in rural India which accounted for 75 per cent of the country's population. A modest space programme was initiated in 1963 under the umbrella of the Department of Atomic Energy, which became an independent Department of Space a decade later.

Rapid technological developments since Independence have no doubt had a significant impact on the nation's socio-economic environment. Thanks to the green revolution, the annual food production in the country has increased from a mere 55 million tonnes to over 195 millions tonnes, transforming the country from a food importer to a marginal exporter, despite a three-fold increase in population, making the spectre of starvation witnessed in the 1960s a faint memory of the past. Installed capacity for electricity generation has gone up from a mere 2.3 million KW to 85 million KW. Increase in the production of crude oil from 0.5 million tonnes to over 32 million tonnes, coal from 30 to over 340 million tonnes, steel from 1 to 10 million tonnes, a ten-fold increase in metal products and industrial goods — these are typical examples of the industrial growth achieved by India through the seven five-year plans. The number of universities has grown from 22 to over 240, with a corresponding increase in the number of technical institutions. The gross national product has likewise increased five-fold in real terms, and the annual export has gone up by more than a factor of 20 to reach 33 billion dollars.

While the above figures provide impressive statistical profiles, the explosive growth of population, which has increased from 360 million to over 935 million in the last five decades, has considerably nullified the benefit of growth, resulting in almost one-third of India's population still continuing to live under the poverty line. With over 40 per cent of the population and 66 per cent of the female population still illiterate, the birth rate of 29 per thousand is yet far from the desirable goal of less than 20 per 1000. The limited availability of land, the lack of employment opportunities and massive population growth have inevitably led to large-scale urbanization and increases in urban population which is predicted to cross 400 million by AD 2000. Rapid urbanization, in turn, has converted the already socially deficient mega-cities into slums instead of making them engines of growth, because of poor energy, transport and housing infrastructure. The mortality of children under five is

as high as 130 per thousand, even though average life expectation has grown from 30 to 60 years, since Independence. Unless the total production is at least doubled on a sustainable basis in the coming decades, it will be an impossible task to provide basic food security to the projected population of almost 1.5 billion by the year 2040.

Considering that a demographic investment of at least 2.5 per cent is required to provide for each one per cent growth in population, India needs to adopt appropriate development policies which can raise our annual growth rate to at least 10 per cent on a sustainable basis. The problems facing India are by no means unique — they are typical of all developing countries which account for 78 per cent of the world's population but contribute just 15 per cent of global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). India with less than two per cent of global land area has 16 per cent of the world's population but less than 1.5 per cent of its forests. It gets two per cent of rain precipitation, has less than two per cent of global telephones, accounts for only three per cent of energy production and contributes to just one per cent of global GDP. India's export earning is less than a tenth of that of Germany, which is more than ten times smaller than India both in area and population. In spite of the significant scientific and technological developments in India, it ranks a low 135 among 175 nations in terms of the quality of life index.

PLUNDER OF NATURAL EARTH RESOURCES

The second-wave industrial revolution, inadvertently, sacrificed ecology in favour of economic gains. Instead of living on the interest, development in the past has essentially thrived on plundering the very capital of natural earth resources. The negative repercussions of the high technology-packaged green revolution, resulting from extensive water logging, inadequate drainage and indiscriminate use of fertilizers, have reduced large tracts of once fertile land into saline and alkaline deserts. Large-scale deforestation to the tune of almost 17 million hectares per year, extensive soil erosion, over-use of the precious water resources, and gross neglect of water recharge have severely degraded almost 1.2 billion hectares of productive land globally. One hundred million hectares of land including a large part of the fertile Indo-Gangetic plain out of a total of 160 million hectares of arable land in India is already degraded; half of it has become unproductive. Recurrent floods and drought in India cause, on an average, a loss of 1500 lives and property worth 300 million dollars each year. Superimposed on these is the real prospect of global warming due to the unprecedented anthropogenic intervention causing a rapid increase in greenhouse gases, which could lead to irreversible climatic changes. The problems facing the world today, particularly the developing nations, was beautifully summarized at the World Summit held at Rio De Janeiro in 1992: 'Humanity stands at a defining moment in the history. We are confronted with a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations,

a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health, illiteracy and the continuing deterioration of the eco-system on which we depend for our well being. However, integration of environment and development concerns and greater attention to them all will lead to fulfilment of basic needs, improved living standard for all, better protected and managed eco-systems and a safe, more **prosperous future.**

The silver lining is that the seemingly insurmountable problems provide an exciting challenge to scientists and technologists to evolve strategies which can lead to sustainable development to meet the basic requirements of the present as well as future generations, without sacrificing biodiversity, ecological integrity and environmental security. Problems arising out of explosive population growth and consequent urbanization due to large-scale migration of rural people to urban areas in search of gainful employment have to be solved through rapid industrialization and improved infrastructure. Spectacular developments in space communication providing global human connectivity have inevitably resulted in globalization cutting across physical barriers and national boundaries. The comparative advantage in the globally-integrated, knowledge-based world economy has undoubtedly shifted from the predominantly agriculture based nations, endowed with rich natural resources, to those nations with brain power which are determined to absorb, assimilate and adopt the phenomenal developments in science and technology and harness them for their national development.

Economic globalization in turn has brought a new awareness of the challenges and prospects in improving the quality of life across the world through creation of a new environment where governments, industries and people of both developed and developing countries can co-operatively work together to mutual advantage. The year 1991 marks a watershed in the economic history of India, as the country went through a paradigm shift from a highly-regulated inward-looking economic policy to a market-oriented, export promotion strategy with reduced governmental role as a means to achieving higher economic growth and its rapid integration with the rest of the world. In this context I wish to focus my attention on the development and progress in different scientific and technological disciplines in India during the recent past.

REVOLUTIONS: GREEN AND WHITE

The remarkable increase in food production from 55 to 195 million tonnes a year over the last five decades is the result of the green revolution involving increased irrigation, better agricultural practices and application of advances in bio-technology. Significant advances in bio-technology have resulted in a variety of new genetically-engineered seeds, early maturing dwarf varieties of crops, pest-resistant hybrid cultivars and the use of integrated pest management strategies. India today accounts for 25 per cent of world's pulses and

has become the world's largest producer of sugar at 260 million tonnes and of cotton at 12 million bales. With the area under irrigation increasing from 20 to 60 million hectares of arable land, India has become the second largest producer of rice, accounting for 25 per cent of global rice output. The oilseed revolution initiated in the 1990s has enabled India to quadruple its output to 25 million tonnes, making the country self-sufficient in oil production. The establishment of new industries for food processing, fertilizer production and pesticide manufacture has resulted in substantially increasing the availability of foodgrain from 400 grams to over 520 grams per person, inspite of the population increasing from 360 million to 935 million.

Notwithstanding this, the average food grain productivity in India remains a low 1.7 tonnes/hectare as against the world average of 2.6 tonnes/hectare and over 5 tonnes/hectare achieved by developed nations. Even with the exploitation of full irrigation potential estimated at 80 million hectares and utilization of the available 20 million hectares wasteland, the annual foodgrain output cannot possibly exceed 250 million tonnes with the present agricultural practices. The challenge of providing adequate food security to the expected population of over 1.5 billion by 2040, requiring an annual production of over 350 million tonnes, can only be met through the initiation of a sustainable new green revolution.

Pioneering experiments carried out during the last five years have clearly indicated that it is indeed possible to double the yield on a sustainable basis by integrating bio-technological advances with appropriate inputs from space remote sensing technology. It has been practically demonstrated that a combination of space inputs on soil characteristics, agricultural practices, underground and surface water resources, vegetation cover, environmental status and meteorological information, with collateral data on cultural and socio-economic factors, can lead to the identification of suitable methods for conserving soil and water resources and increasing productivity on a sustainable basis. In a number of select watersheds where this exercise has been carried out, the results indicate that it is possible to grow two crops even in seriously drought-prone areas, where even drinking water was scarce in summer months. Encouraged by this success, the adoption of a sustainable integrated development strategy has now been expanded to cover 172 districts covering over 30 per cent of the country's area. The White Revolution 'operation flood' — initiated in 1970, using better breeds of cattle and biotechnology inputs, has been able to promote a vigorous growth in milk production at a compounded rate of 4.5 per cent, crossing 70 million tonnes in 1995. Similarly a 7 per cent annual growth in poultry farming and doubling of fish catch to five million tonnes over the same period have helped in improving the food security of people. A number of specialized laboratories dealing with agricultural research, food processing and preservation under the Department of Agriculture and CSIR have been assisting in the setting up of agro-based industries both in the organized industrial sector and in the

rural sector is rising to the export of processed food to the tune of 750 million dollars per year.

METING ENERGY NEEDS

In spite of the forty-fold increase in energy production since Independence, the per capita availability of power is still a low 0.1 tonnes coal equivalent as against 11 tonnes coal equivalent in the USA. It is instructive to note that an average US citizen today consumes as much energy as two Germans, fourteen Chinese, twenty-five Africans, thirty-three Indians and 800 Nepalese. At least a five-fold increase in energy production is needed to meet the growing demands of rapid industrialization requiring a massive investment of over 800 billion dollars in the next two decades. Fortunately, with the liberalization process, the energy sector, which was a monopoly of government, has now been thrown open for private investment which is already attracting even multinational companies from outside India.

The difficulty in tapping hydro-electric potential because of a complex terrain and the limited availability of non-renewable energy resources, such as oil which can hardly last 25 years, and coal which can at best be stretched to 200 years, has inevitably led to the intensification of research in alternative energy sources. The abundance of solar energy throughout the year sparked off research in solar photovoltaic programmes three decades ago, resulting in the commercial availability of 100 kW size solar power plants and mini-systems for rural applications. An increasing number of solar thermal plants and solar ponds are in operation. Extensive research has led to the development and establishment of over 10,000 bio-gas plants as part of an integrated rural energy programme. Wind energy and small hydro-power projects have been developed and installed in many areas which together contribute 1500 MW, with a potential of twenty times this quantity still untapped. A considerable amount of research is going on in the exploitation of tidal and wave energy from the ocean. In spite of these efforts, the contribution of alternative energy sources as of today is just one per cent of the total energy production in the country. Intensive research efforts for the development of commercially viable large-scale alternative energy sources, the estimated total potential of which exceeds 50,000 MW, will hopefully ease the energy problem of the country in the coming decades.

IMPRESSIVE INDUSTRIAL GROWTH

The chemical industry in general and the fertilizer industry in particular have registered an impressive growth over the years. The demand and supply cycle has resulted in making India one of the major fertilizer producing countries in the world, with an installed capacity of 15 million tonnes per year. The pharmaceutical industry likewise has expanded to produce bulk drugs of over

500 million dollars value per year because of the policy of the government to provide health care to people at affordable prices. A number of research establishments have been established to develop pharmaceuticals, new vaccines and drugs, some of them with bilateral or multilateral co-operation, enabling the country to become self-sufficient in practically most of the important life-saving medicines.

In spite of India's pre-eminent position in metallurgy during the iron age and its mastery over investment casting techniques for making exquisite bronze idols which adorn every temple in the country, the art and technique of metallurgical process remained stagnant till recently. Only after 1950 has the priority for metallurgical development been restored as a result of the impetus provided by aeronautical, nuclear and space activities. Extensive research carried out since then has resulted in the development of a variety of light alloys, high-strength steel including maraging steel, rubber, Beryllium, Titanium, lightweight composites, polymers, adhesives and highly sophisticated rocket propellants. Sophisticated casting techniques, the powder metallurgy process and even micro-machining have been developed. Equally impressive has been the progress made in heavy chemicals, turbine manufacture, chemicals and petrochemicals, cement and building materials. Even though India has yet to become self-sufficient in the manufacture of high-quality integrated chips, the software industry has become a thriving export over the last 10 years, constituting almost 30 per cent of the global market, which is indicative of the quality of skilled manpower available. High speed supercomputers have been developed in face of the threat of embargoes and restrictions, which have become a boon in disguise. Steps are being initiated to accelerate research in new materials, light alloys, electronic and opto-electronic devices, advanced sensor systems including bio-sensors, composites and nano-materials — particularly required in the aerospace and defence industries, based on the twelve recommendations of a specially constituted task force on 'Technology Forecast for India 2020'.

A PROFILE OF NUCLEAR POWER

Realizing the importance of developing nuclear science and technology, India established the Department of Atomic Energy through an act of Parliament in 1948 with the primary objective 'to develop, control and use atomic energy for peaceful purposes', a clear departure from the policy followed by the nuclear powers, often forgotten or ignored by the international community. With its emphasis on the generation of nuclear power and nuclear application in agriculture, industry and medicine, several research centres such as Atomic Minerals Division, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre at Bombay, Uranium Corporation of India and Indira Gandhi Atomic Research Centre at Madras were established. India became the first country in Asia to commission its own research reactor APSARA in 1956. In spite of the secrecy surrounding

atomic research and the non-availability of information in the public domain, it is clear that the atomic energy establishment in India has achieved impressive progress in several areas related to nuclear physics and its applications. Nuclear research activities today encompass fields like lasers, magnetic-hydrodynamics, agriculture, isotope production and nuclear medicine, using several research reactors such as CIRUS, Zerlina, Purnima, Dhruva and the first fast-breeder reactor at Madras. The country has become totally self-sufficient in heavy water production with six plants operating to support our nuclear programme. India has the unique distinction of being the first developing country to successfully carry out six peaceful underground explosions — a peaceful one in 1974 and five of a military nature in May 1998.

Atomic power production, the most important peaceful use of atomic energy for an oil poor nation like India, made a modest beginning in 1969, with the commissioning of two 210 MW reactors using enriched uranium at Tarapur with the help of the US nuclear industry. This was followed by the nuclear power reactor in Rajasthan built in co-operation with Canada, using heavy water technology and natural uranium. Since then six more power reactors have become operational to produce over 2200 MW and eight more units of 235 MW each have been taken up, two of which are almost near completion. The main thrust of our nuclear power programme has been to indigenously build reactors using natural uranium as fuel in the first stage, followed by second stage fast-breeder reactors using plutonium, extracted from the spent fuel of first-stage reactors. With the fast-breeder reactor at Madras becoming operational in 1984, the emphasis has shifted to developing reactors which could use Thorium as fuel, taking advantage of the large reserves of natural Thorium available in India. With an independent Atomic Energy Regulatory Board overseeing the functioning and safety aspects of nuclear installations, India's atomic effort is fully geared to achieve the target of 10,000 MW commercial energy production by 2005.

INADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE

The lack of adequate infrastructure for a vast country like India with an area of over 3.3 million square kilometres is the single most important inhibiting factor for achieving rapid economic growth. The total number of telephones in the country even today is just about 1.4 for 100 people and in rural areas almost 2000 hands have to stretch to reach a single telephone. Seventy thousand kilometres of railway and just over two million kilometres of roadway, half of which is unsurfaced, are hardly adequate to meet the transport needs of almost one billion people and 40 million vehicles of all types. The annual per capita air travel, for example, is only 0.01, 20 times lower than that of industrialized nations. The availability of just about 400 medical practitioners and about 1000 beds for a million people, mostly concentrated in urban areas, has left 65 per cent of the population in rural

areas essentially to the care of a meagre 25,000 primary health-care centres and a poorly equipped 150,000 sub-centres. The adoption of a liberalized industrial policy involving private-sector participation and cessation of government monopoly have provided a new impetus for a rapid build up of infrastructure. The policy of encouraging foreign investment has also helped greatly, even though the actual flow of foreign investment during the last five years has been just around five billion dollars, a fifth of what was expected, a large part of which is in communication.

THE SPACE ODYSSEY

The spectacular progress in the development of space technology since 1963 and its application to solve the basic problems of India is undoubtedly one of the most significant achievements of the post-Independence period. The well-focused and goal-oriented space programme was developed in a systematic way, with the first two decades being devoted to building a sound infrastructure, technical expertise and conducting large-scale experiments in the application of space technology. Full-scale operationalization of space technology began in the 1980s with the launching of the unique INSAT series of multipurpose satellites for providing nationwide communication and meteorological services, and the Indian Remote Sensing (IRS) series of satellites for the management of natural resources.

The first significant milestone in India's space programme was achieved with the successful launching of its first satellite Aryabhata in 1975. Simultaneously, using the ATS-6 satellite of NASA, a large-scale sociological experiment was conducted for imparting audio-visual education in health, hygiene, better agricultural practices and family planning to 2400 remote villages in six states, which conclusively established the tremendous potential of satellite communication for rapid transformation of a predominantly agricultural society. This was followed by a satellite telecommunication experiment programme using the France-German satellite, Symphony, for a period of two years to gain experience in the establishment and operation of ground infrastructure. The successful launching of APPLE, India's first experimental communication satellite, aboard Ariane in 1981, paved the way for establishing an end-to-end capability in satellite communication, enabling India to rapidly transition from an experimental to an operational phase.

The initiation of the communication revolution in 1981 through the launching of the unique multipurpose geostationary satellite INSAT-1B was the major landmark in the operationalization of space services in India. Following the INSAT-1 series of three satellites, India continued with the highly sophisticated indigenously built INSAT-2 series, each of them with 50 per cent more capacity than INSAT-1. INSAT-2E, the last of the second generation satellites, is expected to be launched soon and will be followed by the heavier and more powerful third generation INSATS.

Over the years the INSAT system has grown rapidly to become one of the largest domestic satellite systems in the world, providing a number of communication, broadcasting and data services, even to remote areas and offshore islands in the country. With over 6000 two-way speech circuits covering 170 routes and an extensive ground network of 280 fixed and transportable earth stations, the nationwide geographic reach of INSAT has been advantageously used for a variety of applications such as administrative, business and computer communications, Remote Area Business and Message Network (RABMN), facsimile transmission and emergency communication. One of the most innovative uses of INSAT has been the implementation of the unique, unattended, local specific Disaster Warning System (DWS) consisting of over 250 DWS receivers deployed in selected, cyclone-prone east coast areas of the country, which have been saving thousands of lives and livestock every year. The number of VSAT'S providing multi-media services to private and closed user group networks has already reached 5000 and is continuing to expand at the rate of 100 per cent per year.

The most dramatic consequence of INSAT has been the rapid expansion of television transmission in the country through the installation of more than 870 transmitters providing access to over 87 per cent of India's population to national as well as regional services. The use of transportable earth stations, such as Satellite News Gathering vehicles, now allows extensive real-time coverage of important events anywhere in the country. Two exclusive developmental communication channels are being operated to feed over 500 distant education/training class rooms spread across the nation. Recognizing the importance of the two-way interactive communication system, a number of experiments involving target audiences of different types both in the rural and urban areas were conducted to establish the feasibility of using one-way video and two-way audio systems to provide developmental education in an effective way. Encouraged by the success of these, a large-scale experiment has now been mounted in Jhabua District of Madhya Pradesh with 150 receiver terminals promoting development in predominantly tribal areas. The planned launching of GRAMSAT in the next two years will provide a dedicated satellite providing distance education and tele-health services to remote rural areas.

After the enriching experience of experimental remote-sensing satellites Bhaskara-1 and Bhaskara-2 in 1979 and 1981, India embarked on the design and fabrication of a state-of-the-art IRS series of operational remote-sensing satellites. The first generation IRS satellites, IRS 1A and 1B, with a resolution of 30 metres in the multi-spectral bands, have now been followed by IRS-1C and IRS-1D providing 5.8 metre resolution panchromatic and 20-metre resolution multi-spectral imageries, the best in contemporary civilian remote sensing technology. The imageries from IRS-1C and 1D are now received in the USA, Germany, Thailand and Brazil through a co-operative arrangement with European Orbital Satellite or EOSAT of the USA. The third

generation IRS series with a resolution of 2.5 metres in panchromatic and 10 metres in multi-spectral is already under development for launch in the next three years.

Synoptic, high-resolution repetitive imageries being obtained from IRS satellites have become a powerful tool for mapping spatial as well as temporal changes in soil characteristics and land-use patterns to identify forestry, plantation, pasture land, single and double-cropped areas, cultivable waste land and fallow residual lands. Satellite imageries are now operationally employed to identify underground water aquifers, map surface-water bodies, delineate waterlogged regions and predict the acreage and yield of all major crops. Regular bi-weekly bulletins demarcating potential fishing zones in the ocean, based on ocean temperature and phytoplankton distribution, are routinely distributed to our fishermen in the coastal areas to substantially improve their fish catch. Space remote sensing has now become the most important tool for urban planning, environmental monitoring and the management of national natural resources.

Technologies of prediction, monitoring and management of droughts and floods, developed using remote-sensing imageries, have greatly assisted in evolving strategies to deal with such extreme disasters. While INSAT's, with their ability to continuously image cloud cover over the entire Indian subcontinent, provide early warning on cyclones, remote-sensing imageries help in monitoring and managing flood disasters. Likewise remote-sensing derived vegetation indices on a bi-weekly basis, together with real-time meteorological information, has become an important tool for advance prediction of the onset of drought.

Space derived inputs on soil characteristics, agricultural practices, underground and surface-water resources, vegetation cover, environmental status and meteorological information have enabled the implementation of suitable soil and water conservation measures at the individual watershed level. Combining space inputs with relevant biotechnological inputs such as improved seeds, integrated pest management strategies and appropriate cultivation practices, as well as site-specific integrated sustainable development strategies are being implemented in 172 districts of the nation.

Equally impressive has been the progress made in the development of rocket technology. Beginning with a modest launcher Satellite Launch Vehicle-3, or SLV-3 which launched a 40 kg payload into space in 1981, a systematic effort was mounted to rapidly enhance the launch vehicle capability to realize operational vehicles for launching the INSAT and IRS class of satellites. Following the successful launch of the Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle or ASLV, capable of launching 150 kg class of satellites, the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) has been developed, which after three successful experimental flights launched the operational remote sensing satellite IRS-1D, weighing 1250 kgs, on 29 September 1997, into a polar sun synchronous orbit. With the development of cryotechnology,

Geostationary Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) capable of launching the 2.0 tonne class of satellites into geostationary transfer orbit is expected to be ready within the next year, which will make India's Space Programme totally self-reliant. The successful launch of over 20 satellites including seven operational geostationary and four operational remote sensing satellites, the development of heavy launch vehicles PSLV and GSLV, and the promotion of extensive applications in communication, meteorology and management of natural resources in three decades within a modest outlay of about three billion dollars is an impressive performance by any yardstick. Its significance can hardly be overemphasized.

In spite of the end of cold war, the hope of creating a conducive atmosphere for international co-operation is yet to be fully realized. Philosophical statements such as 'if we are to lead the world towards a hopeful future, we must understand that technology is part of the planetary environment, to be freely shared like air and water with the rest of the mankind' are pronounced in every conceivable forum. The reality, however, is that science and technology have become the most powerful currency of power, monopolized and zealously guarded by a minority of advanced nations who are continuing to employ technological hegemonism as a means of influencing and controlling the world. The need of the hour is not only the creation of a new international economic order in which all countries can progress as equal partners by sharing the bounties of science and technology in the next millennium, but the rapid acquisition of self-sufficiency in this crucial area, which naturally will benefit the people of this country immensely.

P.V. INDIRESAN

Technology: Surmounting Cultural Hurdles

*apara bhavate Yajurveda Samam ad Atharvavedah
Sukam bhavate Yajurvedam, Atharvama, Chanda Yajurvedam*

Yajur, Atharva, Chanda, Yajur, Atharva, Chanda

Mundaka Upanishad, 1.1.5-6

PREAMBLE

Why does one study history? Presumably to avoid repeating it! In general, Indian scientists and technologists are so engrossed in their own narrow specialization that they have little use for history. So, in the past fifty years, they have repeated the triumphs and tragedies of the past, a past extending back fifty centuries. Not surprisingly, the pull of fifty years of attempted change is not as yet a match for fifty centuries of entrenched culture.

Few of our scientists know that Tipu Sultan, the ruler of Mysore, was the first person to use self-propelled missiles as a weapon of war. His missiles presented an awesome sight. They terrified the enemy because there was no way of countering them. Unfortunately for Tipu Sultan, his triumph was followed by tragedy. His missiles behaved worse than loose cannon. Their trajectory was so unpredictable that they killed Tipu's own troops as often as they killed the British enemy. So, they had to be abandoned. The only sample left of Tipu's missiles now rests in the British museum. The British managed to capture a few of those missiles; they even tried to improve them. Two hundred years ago, the available techniques of mechanical and chemical engineering were not good enough to stabilize those missiles. So, the experiments to improve them were abandoned until the idea of self-propelled missiles was picked up by the Germans during World War II to make flying bombs. History was then repeated almost exactly the same way as it had occurred in Tipu Sultan's time. As before, the victors of war, particularly the Russians and the Americans, took over where the vanquished had left. This time they did succeed in perfecting the missiles, and in extending their use for non-military applications as well. In recent years, India too has come back into the reckoning in this field. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam is following in Tipu's footsteps to build state-of-the-art missiles.

But it's hard to say just at the moment how much is technology that the country has absorbed in the last thirty years of independence. At the time of Independence, India hardly considered it a priority and imported everything, even the most basic necessities. Now, even though we know that the country does not need it, the fact that languages the American government tried to suppress had to be brought back in order to be able to sell supercomputers, taking up the challenge. Indian designers developed fast parallel computers on their own. Thereby, they made American computers redundant. So, ultimately, it was the American government that had to back down. Currently, India is 80 per cent self-sufficient in manufactured goods. It need be, even with existing resources, so that the country could be raised to over 90 per cent by cutting down on unnecessary imports. Particularly in hi-tech areas where imports are indispensable for lack of money, the country's achievements have been substantial. For instance, ISRO's remote sensing satellites are among the best in the world. Even advanced countries are seeking out ISRO's communication satellites and launching pads. The country's prowess in nuclear engineering might not have fetched kudos from hostile critics, but it has been sufficient to cause much alarm among competitors. Similarly, when the Japanese invaded India with their state of the art mini-trucks, many thought that would spell the doom of India's relatively tiny motor industry. In the event, nothing like that happened. The Tatas took up the challenge and virtually threw the Japanese competition out of the window. In recent years, the electronics industry has made rapid strides and is growing at the rate of 30-40 per cent a year. In particular, Bangalore is now accepted as a major world centre for software. In pharmaceuticals too India has done well. India is the world's cheapest producer of a wide range of drugs. For that reason, the Indian pharmaceutical industry is now accepted as a dangerous enemy by MNCs. That is why India has been singled out in the WTO by MNCs for a frontal attack. As Bijlani,² Chairman of the technology group of the Confederation of Indian Industry, has said:

We shall be perceived as a threat. We have witnessed growing restrictions on export of products and technologies to India. ... India has already moved to second position after Iran in the list of countries to whom import of the so-called 'sensitive items' is banned by the German government. ... India is one of the targeted 'rogue' countries.

Indian technology must be pretty powerful to evoke such strong opposition. Yet, from a broader perspective, the story of Indian technology since Independence is not much better than that of Tipu's missiles. Present-day Indian technology is good enough to cause alarm among competitors, but is so poorly directed that it has damaged India without seriously challenging others. That is why India's economic growth has been tardy. Over the past fifty years, many countries raised their real per capita income by twenty-three

Box 1 India: Successes and Challenges in Poverty Reduction

- *Food and Nutrition* Between 1951 and 1995 food grain production increased fourfold and famines were virtually eliminated. Yet 53 per cent of children under age four — 60 million — remained **undernourished**.
- *Education* In 1961-91 literacy more than doubled, yet half the population is still illiterate. And for females, aged seven and above, the proportion is 61 per cent. More than 45 per cent of children **do not reach grade five**.
- *Health* In 1961-92 life expectancy almost doubled to 61 years, and by 1995 infant mortality had more than halved to 74 per 1000 live births. Even so, each year there are 2.2 million infant deaths, **most of them avoidable**.
- *Safe water* More than 90 per cent of the population has access to safe drinking water. But declining water tables, quality problems and **contamination threaten advances**.
- *Gender* Though the gap has been narrowing in recent years, India is still one of a handful of countries with fewer women than men — **927 females for every 1000 males**.
- *Income poverty* Many people would credit the reductions in human poverty to economic growth. Yes, growth has been substantial. In 1950-94 the index of industrial production increased 13 fold and per capita net national product more than doubled. . . . During the period following economic reform there was first a rise, then a fall in income poverty . . . national aggregates mask wide variation among states . . . 50 per cent of India's rural income-poor live in three states: Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

Certainly, there has been progress in agriculture, industry and more recently, income-poverty reduction. But the record is mixed — and India remains a country of stark contrasts and disparities.

times — in India that has barely doubled. Not surprisingly, UNDP's assessment of India's performance (Box 1) makes sombre reading.

Few people in India are aware how very important technology is for a country's growth and prosperity. According to a study by Denison,² the share of technology development in the growth of United States between the years 1929 to 1982 was 64 per cent. In comparison, the share of capital was barely 10 per cent. There is a widespread view in India that the country is poor because it is poor. It would be more accurate to say that India is poor because the country is poor in technology, because it does not produce — the way successful countries do — substantial amounts of world-class products. No

doubt, in a few cases Indian technology is excellent, if not good. However, one swallow does not a summer make. Neither will a massive bite nor a more sensing catch, therefore, make a country prosperous. Taken as a whole, Indian technology is not yet world class in quality. Because the quality is satisfactory, its products do not sell in required quantities.

THE CULTURAL FACTOR

In a recent study, Olson¹ has analysed the reasons why some countries get rich and why others remain poor. At first sight, it might appear that rich countries have *innately some advantages* in factors of production compared to poor countries. According to Olson, basically, there can only be two reasons why some countries are rich and others are poor. The reason could either be differences in factor endowments (namely, land, labour, capital and technology), or differences in environment. Olson concludes that, of the two, it is the environment that is crucial. According to him, it is not difficult to sustain that argument particularly when we consider countries with common borders like United States and Mexico, South and North Korea, or the erstwhile West and East Germany. He argues that wealth and poverty are not the result of differences in factor endowments but due to faults in political policies and institutions. In his opinion, economic factors like land, labour, capital and even technology are relatively unimportant, not even material. So, though poor technology is the basic reason why India is poor, the basic issue is not inadequate technology development but a poor technology environment.

For instance, it is self-evident that India has much less technological capability than Japan or even South Korea. South Korea, in particular, has rapidly risen since the 1960s from the status of a developing country no better than India to become now an advanced country, so advanced that it is now accepted as a fully developed nation. All that progress has been engineered primarily by buying technology. Olson estimates that for every dollar paid out by South Korea for importing technology, the country's GDP increased by 60 dollars. So, he concludes that (a) the kind of technology needed for the enrichment of a poor country is purchasable in the international market and (b) the cost of such purchase is minuscule compared to the wealth generated as a consequence. India too has purchased considerable amounts of technology but has not utilized it as productively as South Korea has done.

It may be argued that South Korea has done better because it was richer, had more capital. That is not true. In the 1960s, when South Korea set out on the growth path it was no richer than India. Yet, it progressed faster because it managed to attract foreign capital far better than India did. As Olson explains, intrinsically, the more profitable avenues would have been exhausted in rich countries leaving behind only less profitable ones. On the other hand, in poor countries many profitable avenues would have remained

employment. So, even if we assume that India's better pick-ups for capitalists than do rich ones, the culture does not allow flow of capital to develop from rich countries to poor ones in the correct way around. That is why Edison was not going to India to get it. In the discouragement, in spite of a huge technological leap forward, it was prohibition to invest its capital in India that is in the US. So, the technology is not going to flow across borders until the returns to capital is more the same in both places — until the extra profit of poor countries and extra cost of entering such markets. So, poor countries may have little capital of their own but should have little difficulty in attracting capital *provided their culture does not discourage the inflow of foreign capital*. That, however, is not the case in chronically poor countries like India. In India as in all poor countries, the barrier to inflows of capital is not inside the rich countries; it lies right here at home. Or the barrier is not the economies of rich countries but the nature of Indian culture.

Taking a cue from Denison's study, one may discount the importance of capital. Instead, it may be argued that poor countries are poor because their people are unskilled. It sounds reasonable to argue that people in developed countries are more capable, better skilled, better educated, better trained and so on. According to Olson, that argument too is not tenable. He points out that immigrants from poor countries outperform natives of rich countries. That is true whether they seek employment, or become entrepreneurs themselves. For instance, whether in the United States or in Britain, the Indian immigrant community is wealthier or earns more than the natives do. So, India has *a set of more talented people than United States has*, but loses them all due to the brain drain. This too is not an economic problem but a cultural one. If Indian culture permitted India to pay its engineers as well as it pays vendors of soap, it would suffer no brain drain. In the words of Donald Christensen:

A country that trains its engineers and technologists well, then rewards them with both real and psychic income, should have little trouble competing in a world economy that thrives on trading high quality, high tech products over international boundaries.

Thus, we notice that technology is purchasable, capital is available, and the supply of high-quality labour is more than the demand. That leaves only one more factor of production, namely, land and mineral wealth. It is true that there is greater pressure on land in India than in the USA. But many other countries like Japan, Holland, Belgium, England have even higher population densities. Yet they are all much richer than we are. In any case, land accounts for no more than two to three per cent of a nation's wealth. So differences in endowment in land, even arable land, are not crucial. In any case, the cost of potato chips in the market is twenty-five times the cost of cultivating potatoes. Weight for weight, even a spoon costs tens of times more than the iron ore from which it is made. Hence, wealth is derived not

so much from the waste of their resources but by processing them into high-value products. Our land is a problem — it would not be an agricultural society and not a modern one. That is why Singapore is wealthy in spite of having no source of raw materials and India is poor even though it has resources in plenty.

Conceding Olson's argument that it is not economic factors but cultural ones that determine the pace of a country's progress, it is worth enquiring in what way the weight of India's traditional culture has retarded India's technology development. In at least three aspects, Indian culture appears to have inhibited rapid development:

1. Poor technology management skills
2. Lack of proper scientific spirit
3. Confused thinking about self-reliance

LIMITATIONS IN TECHNOLOGY MANAGEMENT

Three instances in my own experience illustrate the kind of errors that India's technical managers routinely commit. One anecdote was recounted in a talk to students of the Indian Institute of Science by Sir Basil del Ferranti around the year 1949. Sir Basil was the chief of Ferranti Limited, in those days a major manufacturer of electrical machinery. He recounted how engineers of the Government of Mysore insisted that transformers supplied to them should have as many as 18 taps — to account for every conceivable variation in their usage. As a rule, transformers have no more than two or three taps because the cost shoots up when the number increases further. So, the normal practice is to use different kinds of standard but simple transformers and change them whenever that becomes necessary. However, Mysore engineers were obsessed with the idea of a 'universal' transformer; they refused to listen to the advice given by Sir Basil. As he told us: 'That is not what I will recommend, but if you insist, I have no objection at all to sell the complex transformers they want. I shall get a custom-designed transformer built specially for them — at a price! That price, I can assure you, will be heavy.'

Another such experience was recounted by Dr Stone, an electrical engineer who had worked in the 1920s in the Soviet Union as consultant from the General Electric Company of the United States. His assignment in Russia was the erection and manufacture of electrical generators for the Dneiper Dam. He explained how the Russians purchased only a couple of generators and fabricated the rest. Dr Stone was very keen that India should follow that example in constructing the Bhakra Dam, but nobody would listen to him. As he told us: 'Nobody in your country listens to me though I have been brought here at a fabulous salary that is an extravagance for a poor country such as yours. Your engineers are sold on buying imported machines and your politicians will not stop them. In a similar situation, Stalin ticked off his engineers who were complaining that American experts were preventing

them from getting the latest machines. He insisted that expert advice must be heeded, and if experts say Russian-made machines would be adequate, no American machines need be imported.'

Right through history, India has been a net importer of technology. Whatever mythology may say, India's contribution to world technology is quite limited. Since Independence, though the economic policy has been strongly in favour of self-reliance, the technology policy has been equally strongly in favour of importing technology. Such imports have often been at a needlessly high price. In the early years of Independence, that did not matter much. The country was flush with sterling balances and India's foreign exchange reserves were next only to those of the United States and Canada. Jawaharlal Nehru wanted the best and bureaucrats were under no pressure to be economical. As a result, the sterling balances were squandered within a few years by technocrats who wanted the 'latest and the best', irrespective of whether that was desirable or not. The craze for the import of technology that began in those days persists to this day even though nowadays the country has little foreign exchange.

A third instance of technocratic error is exemplified by the manner Indian Telephone Industries (ITI) was established. In keeping with the technology culture of those days, R. Natarajan, the founder of ITI, told students of the Indian Institute of Science, 'I need none of you; I will pick up boys and girls from the streets of Bangalore and train them to make telephones.' He was as good as his word. He did succeed in doing so and did establish a prosperous firm. Unfortunately, that prosperity could not be sustained because, in these days of rapid technological obsolescence, prosperity can be sustained only from continuous design improvements. That requires substantial investment in R&D. For instance, in those days, the American Telegraph and Telephone Company (AT&T) invested in the likes of Schockely, Brattain and Bardeen and encouraged them to investigate such esoteric topics as electron conduction in semi-conductors. That trio went on to develop the transistor and transform not only AT&T but the whole world. In contrast, the ITI had no interest at all in employing educated engineers even to develop better designs — the way Sony did — let alone conduct basic research. That culture of surviving on imported technology continues to this day. Not surprisingly, technologically, ITI has become a dependency of foreign manufacturers, and a backwater in the telecommunication world. Now that it has been exposed to international competition, it has even become a sick industry. That ITI should become sick — precisely at the time communications has become the hottest technology all over the world — is a telling commentary on India's technology management. It should be added that ITI was not unique in this respect. Except in atomic energy, the policy was the same everywhere else. It could even be worse. ITI at least went for current technology; the Chittaranjan Locomotive Works opted for the technology of steam engines precisely at the time they were being discarded elsewhere.

These instances can be multiplied. Evidently, the culture of technological administration needs a review. According to Mokyr (pp. 11-12), the following three conditions should be satisfied before a culture will support innovation and development:

1. A cadre of ingenious and resourceful innovators who are both willing and able to challenge their physical environment should be available.
2. Economic and social institutions have to encourage potential innovators by presenting them with the right incentive structure.
3. Diversity and tolerance should prevail in the society to enable technological creativity overcome entrenched vested interests that might incur losses if innovations are introduced.⁷

In other words, innovation and technological progress are unlikely in a society in which people are intellectually malnourished, are superstitious, or are extremely traditional. In brief, what any country needs most is the **scientific spirit**.

LACK OF SCIENTIFIC SPIRIT

Thomas Kuhn⁸ has explained how Western science has remained ahead of all others, and has maintained that lead successfully for several centuries. That success he attributes to certain features of Western intellectual culture. Just like scholars the world over, Western scientists too believe in received wisdom. They too accept certain theories to be absolutely true. But unlike others, they do not stop there. As Karl Popper⁹ has explained, they hold that the purpose of science is to disprove — not prove — theories. That they do by pushing the frontiers of the accepted paradigm farther and farther. For that purpose, they set, and attempt to solve, newer and newer puzzles. In that process, sooner or later, anomalies occur where the paradigm fails to predict results accurately. When it becomes impossible to explain such anomalies, a second process takes over. A concerted attempt is made to discover a new paradigm that performs more satisfactorily than the old one. When a better paradigm is found, a third step follows. The old paradigm is consigned to the dustbin, and the new one becomes received wisdom. This third step is therefore a scientific revolution, a revolution that is no less ruthless than any political one. For instance, not long ago, phlogiston, propagation through ether and radio valves were the bread and butter of science and technology. Nobody hears of them these days. They are all dead as the dodo. In Western science, once a paradigm fails to deliver, it is discarded without pity. That too is an essential ingredient of the scientific spirit.

The iconoclasm that dominates Western science does not prevail in India; Indian scientists and engineers tend to cling to myths even after they cease to be useful. For instance, the Ambassador car is still ubiquitous in India. It started as the 1958 model of Morris Oxford. In forty years, the Ambassador

car has not changed in essentials even though automobile technology has gone through several revolutions in the meanwhile. In post-war Japan, the story was different. Datsun of Japan procured the identical technology from Morris Motors and at the same time too. Unlike in India, Datsun adopted the Western culture of science; it modified the received design step by step. It retained the original design so long as that was worthwhile. Once that became unwieldy, it discarded the design altogether and replaced it by an entirely new one. So, there is no remnant of the original Morris Oxford left in any Datsun car today. In contrast, the Indian model has remained frozen for forty years. Indian engineers have never questioned the design basis of the Morris Oxford. They have not tried to improve upon the original. Indian entrepreneurs too did not care to encourage their engineers to experiment. Advances that have been made in the meantime have been so substantial that the gap between the Ambassador and a modern car is unbridgeable. So, the company has gone shopping abroad once again for new technology. Such repetitive import is a bane of Indian technology. Datsun does not operate that way. It has improved its designs continuously. In small but significant steps, and has kept abreast of the world's best technologies.

Essentially, in India, once a technology is inducted, it hardly benefits from further improvement. It becomes static. For instance, in the case of Tipu's missiles, the British tried to study in greater detail his missiles, and improve upon them. Nobody in India tried to do so. So, in India, once an invention is made, the product (like the Ambassador car) virtually becomes immortal but its technology becomes barren the moment it yields fruit; effectively, Indian technology dies the day it produces a marketable product. Our respect for the past is much too great to give up old ideas. Even when Indians do question the existing paradigm, they do not proceed the way Westerners do, step by step. Instead of applying deductive logic through painstaking scholarship to extend the paradigm to its breaking point, they look for inspiration through inductive logic — the way the Mundaka Upanishad (quoted at the beginning) commends. So, Indian advances in technology are often, as the Mundaka Upanishad demands, *agathra*, without roots. They are often fascinating, mind-boggling even, but not systematic the way Western developments are. Moreover, once accepted, they are accepted on faith and without question. They are not stretched further and further to their breaking limit through step-by-step modifications. They remain incomplete.

That tendency we can witness in many spheres of Indian life. A classic example is the magnificent Big Temple in Tanjore that Rajaraja Chola left unfinished. His son did not deign to complete his own father's work and instead started a more grandiose one in Gangaikonda Cholapuram. In the end, he neither completed his father's temple nor his own. Likewise, our politicians prefer to start new parties rather strengthen old ones. An identical feature we notice in Indian laboratories too. They are veritable tombs of innumerable promising projects that suffered infant mortality and were never

nurtured to reach maturity. Everybody in India wants to be a revolutionary. Unfortunately, the most direct way of starting new revolutions is not the best way of doing so. Instead, it is better to transform the old, and extract the seeds of a new science from the dying embers of the old. That was how the transistor was discovered — through systematic and critical expansion of existing knowledge, not by searching for a new type of amplifying device. The West boasts of many scientific revolutions because its science is essentially evolutionary. In contrast, Indian science is either static (as in the case of the Ambassador car), or inspirational like the case of Tipu's missiles. Who knows on what scientific basis, on the study of which past technology, the inventor of Tipu's missiles based his design? For all we know, he sat under a tree and contemplated and contemplated until the design was revealed to him. That is remarkable intuition but not science.

Incidentally, Western science too had the same culture as ours till quite recently. For instance, Aristotle through some convolution of logic decided that women have less teeth than men. That was the accepted wisdom for nearly 2000 years. It did not occur to anyone to verify his hypothesis by experiment; no one actually counted the number of teeth women had. However, interest in experimental verification took root in the sixteenth century after Francis Bacon wrote his essay *The Age of Reason*. If Indian science and technology has not become fully modernized it is because the country missed not only the Industrial Revolution but the Renaissance too.

Fortunately, the situation is changing fast thanks to India's interest in Information Technology. Unlike other fields, Information Technology gets obsolete very quickly, often within two years. So, computer engineers are always on the run and have to run faster and faster to stay in the same place. Not for them the laidback culture of the Ambassador car or that of the Bajaj scooter. They have to adapt, change and yet build on available paradigms. Globalization of the Indian economy, which has made halting progress since 1991, has accelerated the trend. It appears as though a modern scientific temper has arrived at long last in India. So, the next fifty years of technology promise to be far more exciting and fruitful than the past fifty years.

TECHNOLOGICAL IMPERIALISM

Information Technology in which India is no mean player has brought in its wake the powerful wind of globalization. It helps to globalize production, and in turn, globalization stimulates further technology advance through increased competition. That leads to a cumulative build-up of technology, which, as the *Economist*¹⁰ puts succinctly, 'crushes time and space'. Sadly, technology can crush technologically weak nations also. These days gunboat diplomacy and military colonialism are frowned upon. So, developed nations have changed their tactics though not their ambitions. They have started using technology as a weapon to coerce weaker nations into submission. The

refused to buy American computers until the latter had super computers, and when their price fell to Rs 100 lakhs (10 million) they were ordered to pay to supply equipment to India — in the most glaring example of technology import substitution. So the price was set at Rs 100 lakhs. Most people think it is a must up to 100 lakhs is enough. The following three examples illustrate the point:

1. The Indian navy which procured a communication system for submarines found that the French suppliers were demanding the considerable sum of Rs 100 crore (1000 million). At this stage, the navy approached US manufacturers with whom, for political reasons, they had had no contact at all before. The Americans indignantly supply — at a cost of no more than Rs 10 crore (100 million). Apparently, never expecting the Indian government to go to the Americans, the French had neglected to prime the US manufacturers about the deal. Hence, unlike the European manufacturers, the Americans quoted the true price.
2. In another instance, *INS Viraat* was in need of a rocket for guidance equipment for landing aircraft. The price quoted by an American firm was Rs 95 lakhs (9.5 million). IIT Delhi was approached by the navy to develop the same indigenously; the cost came to Rs 10 lakhs (one million) only.
3. Recently, an American firm quoted Rs 75 lakhs (7.5 million) for railway electronic equipment, but when IIT Delhi succeeded in developing a local version the price was brought down to Rs 17 lakhs (1.7 million).

In fact, there is in technology sales what is known as the Gulf Price — the price that oil-rich but technologically poor Gulf countries can be charged without demur. That can be several times more than the true price. All countries which are not technologically alert are liable to have Gulf prices imposed on them. Essentially, foreign manufacturers form an oligopoly and extract the highest possible price. However, when a country has indigenous technology capability, the oligopoly is afraid that too high a price will drive the country to produce the goods itself. In fact, in such cases, the price is liable to be artificially dropped to such a low level that the local firm is driven to the wall. A recent instance of this type is that of telecommunications switching equipment. Knowing that India has a viable switch designed by C-DoT, foreign suppliers quoted throwaway prices, lower than viable prices for C-DoT technology. That forced down the price of C-DoT switches below the economic level. In a curious and as yet unexplained case, a new entrant offered to supply C-DoT switches and quoted a price of Rs 1500 per line — way below even the bill of materials. The Department of Telecommunications swallowed the bait and demanded that others follow suit. As they could not do so, the manufacture of C-DoT switches came to a halt. Several manufacturers became sick. At this stage foreign suppliers increased their prices to over Rs 7500 per line. We frequently hear of dumping goods, we

appears to be an overstatement in the danger of dumping technology — the danger of foreign firms monopolising advanced technological capabilities is hardly greater than the dangers mentioned.

Finally, there are policy options. Dumping technology does the technology away so much. The more countries we have that are open to such competition and foreign inputs, the more open they are, the more it moves will have what we need: the capital and technological investment is not prohibitive. With capital and technology and human capital and technology, we are technology in the coming age. Therefore, more countries that are open to such competition through investment, that is the solution. But for some, it may prove to be the last warning of the technology war, the other is that the time that they will overtake even the most advanced technology they will spare for us. There is a great fear, and it is true, that we are being by some nations in the country with a few nations. There is a fear, but globalisation will put a halt to the monopoly that has emerged in the market for decades. It is no accident that Rahul Birl, a vocal proponent of trade liberalisation, wants to look only for the products he manufactures, not for the technology he buys, and continues to buy even after being in the field for forty years.

THE SWADESHI DEBATE

Mahatma Gandhi asked why India should import what it can produce. In particular, he queried why India should import cloth and export cotton in return, why the country should not retain to herself the value that is added in converting cotton into cloth. Thus he launched the swadeshi movement, and unfortunately advocated the use of hand spinning as a counter to the spinning mills of Manchester. For that reason, swadeshi has come to be associated with low technology, and the underlying principle of self-reliance has all but been forgotten. In two articles entitled 'Who Is Us' and 'Who Is Them?' Robert Reich¹ has given an improved definition of self-reliance. Reich makes a critical distinction between employees and owners. According to him, the labour force is always 'Us' but the owners may or may not be — even if they are citizens. According to Reich, the Corporation is profoundly less relevant to the economic future than the skills, the training and knowledge commanded by workers.² He adds that control and ownership of corporations is *not* important. What is crucial is how much corporations invest in the future capability of the workers and in R&D employing local scientists, engineers and technicians. A corporation which invests in the training and upgrading of human capital is 'Ours' even if it is owned by foreigners; a corporation which does not invest in human capital is not 'Ours' even if owned by our own citizens.

So, Reich's emphasis is on human capital, as distinct from financial capital. The latter, he explains, is fluid; international capital movements are far simpler and easier than international movements of human capital. So,

human capital is reliable, financial capital is ephemeral and untrustworthy. Further, as a rule, financial capital chases human capital — that is why so many software firms are coming to India. Or, if we have human capital, we need not worry about financial capital. The converse is not true. That makes a skilled workforce a more reliable asset than financial capital. Development based on human capital is dependable; that based on financial capital is **undependable**. As he says:

well trained workers attract global corporations, which invest and give the workers good jobs, the good jobs, in turn, generate additional training and experience. As skills move upward and skill accumulates, a nation's citizens add more and more value to the world — and command greater and greater compensation from the world, improving **the country's standard of living**.

That is why it is wise to base economic progress on human capital rather than on financial capital. In the Hindu idiom, Reich says: worship Saraswati, not Lakshmi! That leads to a complementary question to 'Who is Us?' — What is 'Ours'? According to Reich, an Indian-owned firm, even if it were a public sector undertaking is *not* one of 'ours' if it is wedded to imported technology. For instance, the Indian Telephone Industries (ITI) has largely been dependent on imported know-how; it has therefore built up little or no capability to convert a concept into a saleable product. Naturally, now that the technology it has been using has become obsolete, the firm has lost business. Evidently, ITI has not invested in human capital. All these years, it has paid the price of design and innovation skills to foreign firms. Thereby it has remained a colonial appendage rather than a truly national asset. That has happened not because qualified manpower was not locally available, but because such talents were not patronized or encouraged. From this standpoint ITI is *not* ours. In contrast, C-DoT started off extremely well but it too is losing its attractiveness. If, in its place, a global corporation were to bring in new technology, new management, new skills and further were willing to invest in R&D employing Indian scientists, engineers and technicians, such a foreign owned and managed company would more truly be one of 'ours'. We do have one such example in the case of Analog Devices, which has funded the design of DECT system at IIT Madras. In this case, the American firm funded a totally Indian design group to prove a novel concept and develop a prototype. The ASICs needed for the commercial product were developed in the US and manufactured in Taiwan. The final system will be manufactured in India. Such a transnational enterprise is essentially one of ours because it gives pride of place to Indian R&D engineers. However, most MNCs are unlikely to satisfy this condition and become one of 'ours'.

No debate on swadeshi will be complete without reference to the level of technology at which the country should operate. There are some who are highly critical of the investment India has made in such advanced fields as

space in education and military hardware. They represent the achievement by using the success of East Asian countries. East Asia is indeed a remarkable success. Nations have growth rates been high, even economic depressions have come down in several East Asian countries. Yet there are two problems. As Paul Krugman has argued for clearly, all that progress has not been based on technology but on capital infusion. As a matter of their own national development, Western nations afforded several manufacturing facilities and lent capital to East Asian countries to take over such manufacture. However, they transferred only manufacturing know-how, not design know-how. In effect, East Asian countries are manufacturing appendages, not centres for technology development. They are up against a glass ceiling. They are permitted to attain the highest proficiency in conventional technology, particularly that of consumer products, but no higher. Once the US or Japan turns off the tap of technology, these countries come to a halt. These nations have built not gilded halls but gilded cages.

As recent economic crises in these countries have demonstrated, their economic prosperity too is quite fragile. As a large country, it is not wise for India to accept strict limits to technology capability, nor let Americans ensure the nation's safety. Taking a simple example, a small country can get rich by selling a million TV sets based on foreign technology. For India to benefit equally well, hundreds of millions of such sets will have to be sold. For that, no market exists. Hence, there is no option for India but to explore higher level technology, and that too developed in-house as much as possible. No doubt there is much that India can (and should) learn from the East Asian experience, yet that can only be of limited use.

INVESTING IN INDIAN TECHNOLOGY

Fortunately for India, a number of MNCs led by the top names in IT have started establishing research centres in India. Such firms have not experienced the kind of opposition that Coca-Cola, or Kentucky Fried Chicken or Unilever have experienced. That is understandable: firms trying to exploit the Indian market are 'Them', but those that start research centres are 'Us'. It is true that the R&D allotted to India is not as yet at the most advanced level. Even then, that is a good beginning. These firms have realized that the comparative advantage that India offers is not its large market but the large numbers of its trained personnel. Coca-Cola may have a far bigger investment in India but its profits are unlikely to be substantial as Indian purchasing power is still low. Intel's investment is much smaller but the profit it derives is likely to be substantial because it gets the benefit of Indian capability in technology. Moreover, Intel does not have to bear the cost of countering cultural and political opposition the way Coca-Cola has to do. It is time foreign investors realized that the profit India offers is not her 200 million underpaid middle class but the thousands of well-trained scientists and engineers who can

produce the world's best remote sensing satellites, or nuclear power stations, or new processes for manufacturing drugs.

However, there are already indications that even research centres are being inhibited — of all reasons — by poor quality infrastructure, particularly by the poor quality of our urban habitats. For instance, Bangalore, where many of them have set up their units has become inhospitable in many ways. One solution that is being attempted (notably in Hyderabad and Calcutta) is that of establishing technology parks. These have not been entirely successful. One gets the feeling that not even foreign investors have fully learnt proper lessons from the experience of technology parks elsewhere. Detailed studies of the two most reputed technology parks, in Silicon Valley and along Route 128, demonstrate the importance of the following features.¹²

- Proximity to a reputed university is vital.
- A technology park is organized best as a joint effort of a dedicated teacher, a reputed industrialist and venture capital funds.
- University facilities should be freely available to up-and-coming entrepreneurs, and may in return get a share of the firm's profits.
- University should have extensive distance learning programmes for staff employed in the technology park.
- It is a good idea to locate the technology park along a circumferential highway linking a number of villages near the university.
- The arrangement must be truly reciprocal: The university may lease the land to new entrepreneurs, but only to those who use the faculty frequently as consultants and hire students as employees.

These stipulations are unexceptional. They are being followed but not systematically enough. The most glaring fault lies not in technology policy but in location policy. Technology parks in the United States were not located inside big cities. Silicon Valley did not come up in San Francisco; Route 128 firms did not locate their firms inside Boston. In both cases, they went outside the congested city into small neighbourhoods — but all of them well interconnected. That simple lapse is threatening the entire technology upgradation programme in the country. It can be shown that if a loop of villages is linked together by frequent and rapid transport systems, it could provide a connectivity of several hundred thousand people. Such a route becomes a virtual city, ultimately even more attractive than existing ones. That is how Route 128 is designed, that is how it has prospered. Unfortunately, in our country, unlike in the US, modern amenities are entirely absent outside large cities. So, the tendency is to crowd inside large cities like Bangalore and not move out. That is suicidal. Hopefully, our planners and investors will learn the right lesson — before it is too late — and reach out to the open spaces outside cities. Contrary to popular belief, moving out is not even expensive. The financial cost (let alone social or pollution cost) of crowding into existing cities will ultimately be greater than moving a good distance beyond city

boundaries. That is the lesson foreign investors have to learn. Foreign research laboratories are valuable assets. The country needs them quite badly; foreigners too will benefit from them substantially. It is important that their advance is not choked — like our city roads — merely because our location strategy is faulty, because our habitat technology is outmoded.

CONCLUSION

The progress of technology in India over the past fifty years has been like the curate's egg — good in parts. There is much for the country to be proud of but not enough to be satisfied. In the main, the country's halting progress in the field of technology is attributable to cultural tradition and not to democracy, as many people aver. In the West, experiments are conducted all the time. Ideas are pushed forward slowly and steadily until at some stage the existing paradigm collapses. That is like the straw that broke the camel's back. That is a revolution with a *gothra*. In India, the practice is not in favour of gradual exploration but to flit between two extremes: long periods of static faith interspersed by a sudden outburst of inspirational innovation.

So, we get on a *gothra* revolution, the kind commended by the Mundaka Upanishad. In this respect, we need a change of outlook. Our scientific laboratories should concentrate on continuity, persevere in any one chosen direction. Where this is being done, as in the case of space or nuclear power or defence, India's progress has been quite good. Where such continuity is weak, as in universities and in CSIR labs (with notable exceptions), progress is inadequate.

In the West, the Millennium is set in the future (*Thy will be done*); in India, the golden age of Ram Rajya is set in the past, the remote past. *Western intellectuals seek to discover a glorious future; Indian intellectuals seek to recover the great past*. That too is a cultural burden. Confronted with a novel idea, the invariant Indian reaction is to ask: 'Who thought of it before?' If the idea is claimed to be original, the response is: 'If the idea is worthwhile, why did no one think of it before?' It is difficult for an Indian administrator to accept that anyone, particularly an Indian, can think original ideas.

Just as individuals are bound by heredity, societies too are bound by their culture. As Olson has argued, culture does determine the rate and direction of progress. Indian culture is not bad; it has given profound insights. For instance, the Devanagari script is not only phonetic, it is also embedded in acoustic science of the highest order. Those acoustical principles were rediscovered only in the 1940s and now form the basis of speech recognition by computers. The tragedy is that such profound achievements of the past have to be rediscovered, like the Ajanta caves or Ashoka's inscriptions, by foreigners. We ourselves have little interest in knowing that past, have not tried to utilize the achievements of the past as a foundation for the future. Instead, we have tried to preserve the past by converting the process into a ritual.

That is because our culture missed the intellectual revolution of the Renaissance and the industrial revolution of technology. Therefore, India did not learn to discard outmoded technologies fast enough. No technology, whether it is that of Ambassador cars or Bajaj scooters, can sustain an economy once it is obsolete. As Drucker is fond of saying, we need creative destruction of existing technologies, we should learn to make our own profitable technologies obsolete before competitors do so. These are matters of cultural attitudes. Few in India have had enough self-confidence to adopt such practices.

India cannot copy the South East Asian model. Those countries are small and can accept the glass ceiling of high technology without much harm. India is too large a country to accept the technological hegemony of developed nations. That does not mean that the country should re-invent the wheel nor that it should keep MNCs away. Whether foreign or local, all investors should be welcomed — so long as they invest in human capital substantially. Conversely, even Indian capitalists are next to useless if they invest only in machines and not in people.

At a more mundane level, India's obsolete habitat technology is not only a disgrace, it is also a menace. It is driving away responsible investors; it is choking the nation's progress. Here too we are inhibited by our TINA — There Is No Alternative — culture.

In spite of all these inhibitions, there is no doubt that the country is set on a path of substantial progress. The pity is, it could be faster. The hope is, it will become faster. Fortunately, present indications are that future technology progress will indeed be faster.

NOTES

1. Lower knowledge comprises of the Rig veda, the Yajur veda, the Saama veda, the Atharva veda, diction, rituals, grammar, etymology, prosody, and astrology. Higher knowledge is unseeable, unperceivable by the senses, immaculately conceived and indescribable.
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SUNIL HANDA

Entrepreneurship: The Indian Mindset

The Indian mindset towards entrepreneurship is largely determined by its mindset towards wealth. Compared to many other societies, Indian society has always been less materialistic, placing emphasis on things other than physical wealth alone. But somewhere along the line, we have distorted this almost to the extent of glorifying poverty and condemning wealth.

For example, how many Indians read the following advice Vashishta gives Rama in the Ramayana?

*dhanam ârjaya kâkutstha dhanamûlam idam jagat
antaram nâbhijânâmi nirdhanasya mrtasya ca.*

Acquire wealth. The world has for its root wealth. I do not see the difference between a poor man and a dead one.

And further,

To the undisciplined, wealth is a source of evil. Not so to the disciplined. What matters is not the possession or non-possession of wealth but the attitude to it. We may possess wealth and be indifferent to it; we may possess no wealth and yet be concerned about securing it by any means. **There is no worship of poverty.**

Not surprisingly, the above is very similar to Mahatma Gandhi's concept of *trusteeship*. There too the acquisition and possession of wealth are encouraged; the focus is on the attitude toward wealth, and the uses to which it is put.

In spite of these expressions, the traditional and predominant Indian outlook is reflected more by the caste system, which broadly places businessmen in third position after 'scholars' and 'rulers'. Especially after Independence, due to socialist influences, and until just a few years ago, the focus on or encouragement of business was very low. It was almost as if business was seen by governments as an anti-social activity!

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AFTER INDEPENDENCE

Seen from another perspective, the post-Independence years were full of enthusiasm and excitement, which probably spilled over from the pre-Independence feeling of the power of being able to build the destiny of a nation. These were years of philanthropy, too, when, led by some truly

eminent businessmen-cum-leaders, business was again being seen as socially significant and positive.

Then somewhere along the way, the country seemingly entered a long, dark tunnel — a tunnel it has taken us about forty years to *begin* to emerge out of. These years have seen other nations zooming past us not only in economic prosperity, but — let us admit it — social prosperity too, whether the parameter is health, education, employment or living conditions.

Happily, things are changing now. Once again there is beginning to emerge a spirit of enthusiasm, and a belief in ourselves — that Indians as individuals and as a nation can be the best in the world. The rules of the game, the stakes and players have changed from what they were fifty years ago, but the spirit and the desire to win are there again.

It is important that a nation understands the value and importance of entrepreneurship. The importance is simple: *More entrepreneurial nations are more prosperous* — they afford their citizens better standards of living, and their children better education. An important reason why America is prosperous today is that it is an entrepreneurial nation. To become an entrepreneurial nation, its people must of course be entrepreneurial, but equally important there must be an *atmosphere* and *encouragement* of entrepreneurship. This is a function both of government and of the nation's culture. (To appreciate that people and nations can be more entrepreneurial or less entrepreneurial, one needs only to look at different states in India — Gujarat, for example, is a state where the culture (and government) encourages entrepreneurship and this is reflected in the significantly higher percentage of people in business, as opposed to regular employment.)

There are many indications that the Indian mind is essentially creative and entrepreneurial. A common example is the success of Indian entrepreneurs overseas, whether as traders in Africa or as technocrats in Silicon Valley. I have observed that Indians are much more easily willing to move beyond or outside the system to find the solution to a problem (whereas the strength of some other peoples — Germans, Japanese? — is their meticulousness working *within* a system). Though this can be a disadvantage at times — systems work less in India as the tendency to 'beat the system' is higher — it can be a great advantage from the point of view of entrepreneurship. Whereas a meticulous systems-based person would get stumped when some part of the system beyond his control fails or misbehaves, the Indian takes it in his stride and hunts out a solution, somehow!

With an essentially entrepreneurial mind, why are we not an Entrepreneurial Nation? I think that a part of the reason is that entrepreneurship was discouraged by governments (and consequently society) for hundreds of years since the beginning of foreign rule. The brief spell of entrepreneurship we have seen *as a nation* was during the freedom struggle; which unfortunately died out after the struggle was successful.

The bigger reason, I believe, is a *chronic lack of confidence in ourselves* —

individually and collectively. Without tackling this problem — which would be the equivalent of instilling an 'I Can!' and 'We Can!' belief in each Indian — I do not think we can become a more entrepreneurial nation.

THE POWER OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP

It is well known that the turnover of a company like General Motors is more than the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Turkey and Denmark. That of Ford is more than the GDP of South Africa. Norway's GDP is about the same as the sales turnover of Shell. Pakistan's GDP is less than the turnover of IBM. According to the *Human Development Report 1997*, among the 100 largest economies in the world, fifty are megacorporations.

The combined net worth of the seven richest men in the world (is it a surprise that most are entrepreneurs?) is more than that of most of the above nations.

Some people may believe that we are better off the way we are, as an entrepreneurial society will necessarily become completely materialistic. I do not believe that an entrepreneurial society necessarily means a more materialistic one. This may seem surprising, since most of the successful and prosperous ones *have* been materialistic, but there are two counterexamples: one of which is India itself in its past — we *were* an extremely prosperous country about 400 years ago. The second is that of certain Asian countries which are consciously working to preserve their Asian values and culture while acquiring wealth. An example that comes to mind is Singapore (whose population is largely Chinese and a little Indian). Whether they will succeed or not only history will tell, but I believe that India can be entrepreneurial, and prosperous, and yet hold on to many of our traditional Indian values which are also a modern imperative.

NON-BUSINESS ENTREPRENEURSHIP

After stating that entrepreneurship is both important and desirable, it is in order to clarify that entrepreneurship is not restricted to business alone. Entrepreneurship can take many forms, and entrepreneurs are persons who try out new ways of doing things, not from an academic point of view, as an experiment, but taking overall responsibility for its success or failure. Today there is a need for entrepreneurship in politics, in the running of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), in managing old people's homes — of persons who work in these fields not repeating or re-doing the same old things, but trying out new things, and innovative ways of doing existing things.

The newness is *the* most significant aspect. While most people operate within a set of 'givens' that define the context, the entrepreneur is brash enough to question the given and even try to change it. The other significant

phrase is 'overall responsibility', and that distinguishes the leader and entrepreneur from others. I recently read this passage in the context of competitive modern business:

Managers have to envision the future and navigate the business for success. Most managers fashion themselves as employees and their bosses as employers. In reality everybody is an employee, even the Managing Director (MD) or Chief Executive Officer (CEO) (unless they are sole owners). *People who take responsibility for their careers behave and think like CEOs, immaterial of their particular specialisation.* They forecast, think and respond to the context they find themselves in. They make their own careers. People who expect the larger system to define what they ought to deliver, and then wait for rewards for a job well done, become dependent on the system. They view their relationship with the organisation as a contract — a balance sheet of 'promises' and aspirations fulfilled and not fulfilled. A sure recipe for feeling powerless and disappointed. (Emphasis mine)

ENVISIONING OPPORTUNITIES

Wherein lie the opportunities for the Indian entrepreneur today? A management professor of mine, who is also an adviser to one of India's leading textile groups, once said that he has learnt two things from his experience in business and academics:

- First, that in the long run there is no difference between what is stated by theory, and what is achievable in practice
- And secondly, there is no difference between the priorities of a forward-looking management and the priorities of the nation.

In trying to envision opportunities, therefore, it is necessary to look forward and try to envision what will be the needs and demands of the future. Microsoft's Bill Gates, who built up a software empire by trying to imagine what would be important in a world where 'computing were almost free', envisions a world twenty years hence where *communications* — anytime, anywhere — will be free. Can we spot some opportunities there?

If we stick our necks out today, and imagine how the world will change in the next twenty years, I think we will see some of the following: globalization will be a reality, your competitor may be anywhere in the world, physically. Preserving the environment will become a basic necessity — forcing in the coming generation a much more 'conserving lifestyle' than we have found it necessary to adopt. Technology will dominate our life — communicating with anyone, anywhere in the world will be instantaneous and almost free. This will push up the pace of life further. People will work more from home. There will be a few *Mega* corporations — most companies will be widely held — so there will be fewer owners, and more employees.

These corporations will have global capacities and extremely high levels of automation. Government will be made by computers; there will be fewer students than most public schools; TV personalities. Service industries will boom.

What will happen to the world's poor? I believe that they will face a road with a fork — some will help bring a whole generation and reach high standard of living, but others may be completely ignored and excluded from the rich, prosperous global village. Which route they take will depend on what they can offer to the global village — their skills — which depends to a great extent on the quality of education they have been provided by society.

Every society, I believe, has a *defining factor* — this changes with time and place. Often in human history it has been military strength, sometimes it is some natural gift, sometimes it is a man made event like the Industrial Revolution, sometimes it is religion. This defining factor influences every aspect of human life. The defining factor today and for a few decades more at least, I believe, is and will be, *technology*.

If the defining factor is military strength, societies that have a well-developed military training programme will be successful. If it is trade, societies which are of an outward looking and exploratory nature will succeed. If some naturally occurring element is the defining factor, societies which have it will be more successful. What is important for exploiting *technology* as a defining factor? Technology creates and demands a *knowledge society* — the society which has the best educational systems and training will succeed!

The converse is also true — societies which ignore the defining factor will suffer and often be consigned to history, until they make a change in their approach, or the defining factor changes.

I therefore believe that there are many opportunities for Indian entrepreneurs — these exist in sectors like information and other services, distribution and dealership and manufacturing — but the real opportunities exist in the social sectors like health care, especially education.

IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION

Today, two more 'products' have added themselves to the list of the three 'universal necessities' — bread, clothing and shelter, namely *education and entertainment*. And of these five, only two, 'shelter' and education are of the nature of investments which result in asset building.

There are many problems facing our society today. Very often, we discuss these problems, and what the possible solutions could be to these. Such discussions are often very frustrating as the problem seems too overpowering and large. The only 'solution' seems to be to push it under the carpet and go on with one's routine.

The main reason for the feeling of frustration is that there is no short-term

relationships among positions. But these are not all. I believe, and I hope you believe, — and are convinced, — that a substantial part of the transformation required to achieve a more democratic society is in the field of the arts and how to use a community not opposed to your understanding and learning about it. In the larger sense, the art of living goes on. Culture is the sharing of people, of living people, ideas, and creative thoughts. Education requires the sharing of knowledge of history and science — that is, what we believe that we know, and so on.

[illegible]

Particularly important in this regard are the results of a study by the author (1982) which show that the way in which the rate of interest is set is not by itself sufficient to ensure that the system is stable. The rate of interest must be set to be positive and also below the value of the marginal efficiency curve. The rate of interest must also be low enough to ensure that the growth of investment is not negative. It is for these reasons

These observations will require ongoing assessment of progress. But a complete first-generation assessment, which results will take at least twenty-five years to be complete, is a form of education in the broadest sense. In these months or even the next year, it is critical to establish an infrastructure for the nation to carefully plan its education strategy, and get it right the first time.

ASHOK SOOTA

Information Technology: The Knowledge Industry

Recently, a friend of mine told me that 'Software is to India, what oil is to the Middle East.' It was a colourful way of describing what he saw as the importance of software to this country. As I reflected on this statement many images and thoughts flashed through my mind: the changes in Bangalore as it became the first focal point of this Yuppie industry, the evolution of new growth centres all over India, the mushrooming of private software educational institutions, a World Bank report that India is the most preferred software outsourcing country: wonderful in the context of other studies which describe a worldwide shortage of 500,000 software engineers. I recollected a recent visit to my alma mater, the University of Roorkee, where I learnt that a significant proportion of students, spreading across the whole range of engineering disciplines, had been absorbed by the software industry and, more interestingly, that the students themselves had organized courses in software to supplement the curriculum. On a more amusing note, I recollected another observation that, in the matrimonial columns of India's newspapers, 'Software professional' has displaced engineers and doctors as the most valued, vaunted and wanted label. Every middle-class parent wants his child to be computer literate. Software indeed has caught the interest and imagination of the country. Yes, I concluded my friend was right in his observation.

I was brought back to jarring reality when I recollected the strong words of the eminent management guru, Dr C.K. Prahalad, that 'India has no software industry.' Invited to address the Software industry in 1995 by the industry association Nasscom, Prahalad's objective was to shock and awaken the leaders gathered there. His message was clear: it is not enough to just work for others. It is important to develop our own products, solutions, intellectual property and the capability to execute large, complex projects on total ownership basis. It is of little value if our engineers execute bits and pieces of these projects without opportunity to understand the whole. Prahalad went on to say that the Indian software industry is relying on a cost advantage in the cost of professionals and this differential will not last forever. I also paused to reflect on the truly great achievements of India in the field of Information Technology (IT). The most visible ones have been from Indian scientists and entrepreneurs based in Silicon Valley of the USA,

ostensibly a brain drain and not an enhancement of the country's intellectual capital. There have been outstanding software contributions to our missile and space programmes, but very little innovation on the commercial and industrial fronts — with a few exceptions. Of late, some innovative developments in software are being carried out by Indian software engineers on Indian soil, but here also some of the most exciting work is being done within the research laboratories set up by multinational companies in India either on their own or in conjunction with their Indian partners.

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

While accepting the bleak reality of my second chain of thought, I decided to take a perspective look and reassess the state of the industry, and its **importance for India's future.**

So here we have two diametrically opposite pictures for the evolution of the industry: one which leads to a brain drain as our engineers either leave the country or are converted to glorified programmers. The other picture visualizes the creation of a vibrant, dynamic industry which leads India into the twenty-first century and helps it to bridge the gap with the West. I am an optimist for India's future. I sincerely believe we will bungle our way through. Partly for this reason, I believe the latter positive alternative will prevail. Apart from innate optimism, there is a logical conceptual reason for my expectations of the future. For this we have to see the software industry as part of the larger, integrated Information Technology industry and IT itself as one of the most important of the knowledge industries.

Peter Drucker, one of the foremost thinkers of our time, says in his article 'The Age of Social Transformation' that we are entering 'an economic order in which knowledge, not labour or raw material or capital' will be the key resource. He goes on to state that the 'competitive position of every single country, every single industry, every single institution within society' will depend on the productivity of knowledge work. From the angle of developing nations such as India, this is good news as no one nation can have a monopoly on knowledge. The knowledge base of many industries is increasingly dispersed. Also as product life-cycles get shorter, India which has no baggage to protect can use the technology turbulence to seek its areas of entry into new markets and new industries. The other positive aspect of knowledge industries is that anyone with a viable idea can become an entrepreneur. Past industrial development gave the lion's share of reward for industrial enterprise to those that controlled capital. In future, capital will be seen as a means to tap into and leverage knowledge. Indications are that venture capital sources will become increasingly available in India and will unleash a wave of entrepreneurial energy amongst people who are essentially industrious and innovative but have so far lacked opportunities. The fact that much of the best work is being done in the laboratories of

multinational corporation (MNC) centres in India also need not be a deterrent or a matter of regret. The important thing is that the work is being done by Indians and that is where the knowledge resides. As the software content and intelligence of all products and services increases, it should be our goal to provide an increasingly higher proportion of such content. There are positive indications too that many Indian IT companies have taken Dr Prahalad's advice seriously. The mantra of the industry has now become 'moving up the value chain'.

The steps taken so far may be small and hesitant in nature, but the first steps have been taken and a journey has begun.

Mention was made earlier of the brain drain mostly to the USA of Indian software professionals. Even this has had its positive consequences. Bright Indian minds have done well abroad and many of them, having reached positions of authority, have been championing India's use as an outsourcing base. What we were not able to accomplish when the West sought alternate bases for manufacture, we have been able to accomplish in software and this may well turn out to be the more important battle to win. Another aspect of the Indian presence abroad is that it has also encouraged entrepreneurial efforts. Indians in the USA have even created an organization called TIE which facilitates such ventures. The final step of Indians returning from the USA to set up their own ventures on Indian soil has also begun, but the return of migrants has not gathered the sort of momentum which helped make Taiwan the world leader in the supply of computer hardware. The trickle will not become a flood in the near future but even a handful of such persons can make a major difference. I have avoided giving examples or naming organizations which have been successful in creating products or moving up the value chain or individuals who have taken the entrepreneurial plunge. And the reason is that the success stories form a reasonably long list and I hesitate to pick out some without the others. Besides, since the efforts are of recent origin, the big winners downstream may be different from those who have shown early success.

ABSENCE OF LEADING EDGE APPLICATIONS

The weak link in our effort to move up the value chain in software is the absence of leading edge applications in our own country. And this brings me to the subject of Information Technology as a whole. It is important for India to be successful on a long-term basis in the software industry. It is even more important to use Information Technology to make our industries more competitive and our government more efficient. Success in software is after all success in one industry. Successful use of the power of IT would enable us to win on many fronts. IT has the power to compress time and distance. IT can be used to introduce new products faster, enhance the reach and richness of communications, improve the quality and productivity of education

through machine data and human intelligence to create more efficient, improve supply chain management, improve customer loyalty — the list of benefits is endless. However, in the Information Age is an oft-repeated statement which has become cliché. At first glance it seems that IT has not lived up to its promise of there being a paperless world. But many innovations are poised for major breakthroughs including developments in voice recognition, artificial intelligence, etc. and soon. Above all, the explosion of the Internet provides worldwide data connectivity, leading to the massive expansion of electronic commerce. We can envision the possibility of achieving a cashless world before we achieve a paperless one. India has to decide whether to use this as an opportunity or to be a laggard.

I had earlier noted the absence of leading edge applications in the country. This has grave implications for our software industry. Due to this, we do not have a home market which we can use as a testing ground, as a laboratory for experiments and innovations. Because only a few companies can afford to take such risks in overseas markets, the risks are not taken and we miss out on opportunities to learn and grow. One of the reasons for this lies in the past when our closed environment did not make demands on industry to excel, to be world class. Even after the country opened its markets, the retarding factor has been the absence of infrastructure to enable real-time and on-line applications. The positive thing that can be said about our communications infrastructure is that it is significantly better than our other physical infrastructure, which is not saying much. The cost of communication links within the country and from India to the world is still much higher than in the developed countries. We can ill afford this as cost effective communication links are essential for remote execution of software projects and minimizing onsite expenses. However, the government has made the right announcements on the Internet policy and we now must hope that roadblocks will not be raised in its implementation and in the creation of a National Information Infrastructure. This will be a key to the introduction of electronic commerce and give Indian industry a chance to use this new marketing tool for gaining access to new worldwide markets, helping us to overcome our handicap of not having distribution channels abroad. Indian industry is seeking to be a part of the global marketplace and globally competitive. As we 'Infotise' our businesses, we will not only be able to use IT as a differentiator but will need innovative new applications. Our software industry will then have a receptive environment in which to try out new ideas, new products and new services which can be made a success first at home and then abroad. Presently, the successful launch of a new IT product or service abroad is almost a prerequisite to making it a success at home! Since Information Technology can have an impact on every institution, every function, every process, we will accelerate the success of our software industry by making ourselves leading edge users of IT.

THE HUMAN FACTOR

I would now like to dwell on the key resource responsible for success in the Information Technology industry: people, people, people. This is not surprising in a knowledge-intensive industry. For some reason, Indians seem to have a natural skill for software development. Our English speaking ability is often cited as an advantage. But realizing the importance of other markets, efforts are being made to learn the Japanese language and European languages in a bid to make a bigger mark in these markets. Technically our people are quick learners and win praise for being industrious, conscientious and as good as the best. The major criticisms (from customers) have come on lack of domain skills, poor communication, inability to say 'no' and poor project management. Cross cultural training and other training programmes will make good these deficiencies over a period of time. Like software developers in other parts of the world, our people have a hunger to learn new skills and sometimes loyalty to their profession or their desire for self-development transcends their loyalty to an industry or customer. Of late, the huge worldwide shortage of software developers seems to have had a collective impact on the psyche of the community: commercialism has crept in, manifested by a preference for a quick buck even if it is not in line with the better long-term career choice. These, hopefully, are temporary aberrations. By and large, the majority have acquitted themselves creditably. Ongoing success will require continuous enhancement of skills. Fortunately, we have software training organizations within the country which deliver both quantity and quality. The chief executive of the largest training organization in India claims to have 'cumulatively trained a million persons with a hundred million more to go'. Significant onus for enhancing skills on a continuous basis will be on the software companies. Most companies have good in-house training programmes. A few organizations have also developed close links and innovative programmes with leading educational institutes.

A word must be said about the role of government. Fortunately, in the nascent stages of the industry there were visionaries in the department of electronics and other parts of government who helped create the right climate to encourage this sunrise industry: Software Technology Parks were created across the country, communications links were provided, as also tax/financial benefits and there was focus on education and training. It would not be wrong to say that national will and desire to succeed in this industry is shared even by the government! In a country known more for populist politicians, we have one chief minister who personally gives multimedia presentations on how he will use Information Technology for the transformation of his State! Hopefully, his enthusiasm will be infectious and other States will take up similar programmes.

The Indian software industry has acquired a reputation for being a low-cost, high quality provider. It is a matter of pride that from the very beginning

the industry has had a focus on products and a high customer orientation. The quality orientation is particularly reflected in the World Trade Organization's (WTO's) study that India has the highest percentage in the world of software companies to gain International Standards Organization (ISO) certification. Over time, countries which are today perceived as being providers of low-cost, low-quality services such as China, Philippines, Hungary, will challenge us. India is reputed to have invented the 'Zero'. The digital world of Information Technology could not have been possible without the humble Zero and this could possibly rank amongst the most important inventions of all times for the benefit of mankind. As India did not extract any patent fees or royalties from the world for this invention, it would be a just reward if India triumphs in the future battle for leadership in the software industry! I am confident that we will triumph and this will be the most important industry and transforming force for India's next fifty years.

Finally, this brings me back to the analogy of my friend regarding software being to India what oil is to the Middle East. It seems, after all, that my friend got it almost right. Software and Information Technology are not as important, but much more important to India than oil to the Middle East. Oil is a diminishing resource and ultimately technology will find some substitute. The software content of the world will keep growing; Information Technology is a knowledge industry and there will never be a substitute for knowledge.

Part III

Society

T.K. OOMMEN

Society: Tradition and Autonomy

For a meaningful understanding of social transformation, it is useful to start with the onetime from which change started — that is, the social making of the entity analysed. Similarly, it is necessary to indicate the direction in which transformation is taking place. In this essay I shall attempt three things: First, provide a picture of the making of India through a discussion of seven major events which occurred during a long span of time. Second, identify the major sources of social transformation and the trends unleashed by them. Third, trace the direction of social transformation through an analysis of significant processes and trends.

ACCRETION OF IMMIGRANTS

India emerged through a process of accretion of immigrants and dislocation of the original inhabitants. The first recorded large-scale immigration occurred some 5000 years ago and is usually referred to as the Aryan advent. It is widely recognized, although latterly contested, that the Aryan advent pushed the Dravidians to South India, presently constituting the four states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, pushed the tribal population, variously described as Adivasis, Gijjans, Vanavasis or Scheduled Tribes, to the relatively less hospitable hilly and forest regions, and enslaved the exterior castes or depressed classes, currently christened as ex-untouchables, Harijans, Dalits or Scheduled Castes. The important point is that these three social categories — Adivasis, Dalits and Dravidians — together constitute nearly 50 per cent of the Indian population. That is, the original inhabitants of India were dislocated but not exterminated through the Aryan advent.

The Aryans brought with them, or gradually evolved, a religion (Hinduism), a language (Sanskrit) and a new social order and colour (varna) based stratification system, all of which are essential ingredients of the 'national' heritage today. While 83 per cent of Indians are Hindus, the mother tongues of 72 per cent of Indians belong to the Indo-Aryan language family derived from Sanskrit. The varna scheme, which divided the population into five social categories — Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras and the 'Untouchables' — based on social division of labour, had become the founding rock of the caste system which institutionalized inequality in India. That is, the immigrant Aryans got nativized and their cultural baggage

became the 'national' heritage. But since it happened in the distant past and occurred gradually, the process appears to be, and has come to be, **accepted as natural**.

The second major event in the making of India was the rise of the three Indian protestant religions. Both Jainism and Buddhism emerged in the sixth century BC, repudiating the authority of orthodox Aryan Brahminism. Jainism was at its peak in different pockets of India for between four and eight centuries but in Independent India its adherents account for less than half a per cent of the total population. Although it emerged as a protest against the caste system, in the course of time Jainism also got entrapped in it. There are 87 castes and sub-castes among Digambaras (the sky-clad) and 38 castes and sub-castes among Svetambaras (the white-robed), the two leading Jain sects. Generally speaking, Svetambaras are all of clean-caste origin but Digambaras have accommodated a few low-caste groups. Jains are not socio-culturally distinct from Hindus, although they have their distinct religious doctrines and rituals. Secondly, Jains do not identify themselves with any specific territory or language within India.

Although Buddhism is a contemporary of Jainism, its life history and social identity are substantially different. The Buddhists in India today constitute only 0.70 per cent of the population. But even this increase occurred after 1956 when Dr B.R. Ambedkar took Diksha in Nagpur. Most Buddhists of India are converts from the ex-Untouchables and are referred to as neo-Buddhists. They are mainly concentrated in Maharashtra, in western India, where they constitute 7 per cent and in Arunachal Pradesh and the North-East, where they constitute 13 per cent of the population. Buddhists do not identify themselves with any particular language or territory in India.

India's third and youngest protestant religion, namely Sikhism, emerged only 400 years ago. Sikhism fought against both Hindu and Islamic orthodoxy but tried to fuse the two. Today Sikhs constitute slightly less than 2 per cent of India's population. They strongly identify with Punjab as their homeland and have a common language, Punjabi, written in the Gurmukhi script. Although the majority of Sikhs (78 per cent) live in Punjab, they are widely dispersed all over India. These factors — religion, language and territory — conjointly provide a strong cultural identity to Sikhs.

The third major event in the making of India occurred through a series of immigrations of some of the 'world religions' into the Indian subcontinent. The first to arrive was Christianity. According to myth and belief, St Thomas, one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ, came to Kerala in the first century AD and converted many to Christianity. While there is no conclusive historical evidence to support this belief, there were Christian settlements by the third century AD in Kerala. Similarly, Phoenician Muslim traders came to Malabar in the seventh century AD; some of them settled down, married locally and

not assimilated. Both instances clearly point to the presence of pre-colonial Christianity and pre-conquest Islam in India.

The next set of immigrants who came to India were Jews whose date of arrival is not clearly identified. They, however, have remained a small group numbering a mere 26,000 at the peak of their presence in India in the 1940s. A substantial proportion of them returned to Israel in the wake of the Zionist movement in India. Zoroastrians came in the eighteenth century and made India their home. It is estimated that nearly 15 per cent of the world's Zoroastrians live in India. A tiny community of less than 100,000, Zoroastrians are prosperous and visible in the economic and professional arenas. The Bahais came to India only in 1872, fleeing from the religious persecution which they were subjected to in their homeland, as were the Zoroastrians earlier. While the Jews and Zoroastrians did not ever attempt to proselytize, the Bahais did convert. In the 1960s they numbered some 400,000, the main concentration being in the Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh. Due to the negative responses that proselytization evoked among the Indian public, the Bahais quickly retreated and the effort was never revived. It may be noted here in passing that all the immigrants — Jews, Zoroastrians and Bahais — came from the Middle East.

There is another set of religious communities which came to India after independence from nearer home. They are Tibetan Buddhists from China, Bengali Hindus and Muslims from Bangladesh, Tamil Hindus from Sri Lanka, Chakma Buddhists from Bangladesh, Nepali Hindus from Bhutan, and Buddhists from Myanmar. These immigrants total 25 million. Thus there were three streams of immigration of religious communities into India. The first constituted by Christians and Muslims, the second consisting of Jews, Zoroastrians and Bahais and the third made up of Buddhists and Hindus. The religious complexity of India is staggering.

The fourth major event in the social making of India was the Muslim conquest spanning eleven centuries beginning with that of Sind in the eighth century. Only a small section of the conquering groups settled down but due to proselytization a substantial number embraced Islam. Pre-partition India consisting of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan had some 300 million Muslims, the largest congregation of Muslims in the world. India has some 120 million Muslims today and is the second largest Muslim country in the world.

The Muslims brought with them a new language of administration (Persian) in north India. A hybrid language, Urdu, emerged through interaction between Hindi and Persian. Today Urdu is associated with Muslims and north Indian Muslims invoke it as an identity marker. Muslims also brought with them a rich Persian literature, a sophisticated legal system and a system of medicine — the Unani. Their innovations in land tenure and administration have substantially changed Indian society. But the Muslim social structure did not remain intact. Two instances are of particular importance here. First, the predominantly foreign elements came to constitute

the Ashrafs and converts came to be known as Ajlafs. The Ashraf-Ajlaf dichotomy is an important aspect of Indian Muslim social structure. Further, the Ajlafs are divided into at least three groups based on their caste status: the Rajputs, the Backward Classes and the 'untouchable' converts, a testimony to the capacity of the caste system to penetrate every incoming social group in India. The second relates to the Sufi traditions which produced religious syncretism and the gigantic effort made by Akbar to fuse Hinduism and Islam to create a synthetic cult called Divine Faith (Din-e-Ilahi).

The fifth major event which contributed to the making of India was western colonialism. If the Hindu and Islamic cultures were both traditional, western intrusions led to a confrontation between traditional and 'modern' world views. The earliest to come were the Portuguese (fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), followed by the Dutch and the French in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries respectively. But it was the British who consolidated their power and succeeded in establishing their dominance for two centuries. The British too brought their religion (Christianity) and language (English) with them, both of which were added to the cultural mosaic of India. Although western missionaries did proselytize and large-scale conversions did occur, the official policy with regard to religion was one of indifference and neutrality. Consequently, only a little over two per cent of Indians are Christians. In contrast, the English language has a strong presence and it has become an important identity marker of the contemporary elite, although the proportion of the population that speaks English is around five per cent.

The British effort to modernize India could be seen in terms of a series of 'izations', all of which contributed to social transformation. The more important of these were industrialization, professionalization, democratization and secularization. The introduction of western science and technology as well as modern occupations and professions did weaken the link between caste and occupation. Similarly the initiation of a series of legislations and social reform movements did militate against traditional practices like widow burning, untouchability, slavery, child marriage and so on. Finally, the introduction of land reforms planted the idea of individual ownership in property, relegating the traditional communal/collective ownership.

The freedom movement should be viewed as the sixth major event in the making of India. Notwithstanding the prevalence of a pre-colonial civilizational consciousness, it was the anti-colonial movement which facilitated the crystallization of an Indian consciousness whose content was primarily political. In spite of the fact that a multiplicity of religions were professed and a large number of languages spoken in India, and that there was nothing like an all-India dress, cuisine, dance, music or architecture, the anti-colonial movement not only opposed political but also economic, cultural, racial and psychological dominance by the colonial ruler. Its externality and illegitimacy were universally acknowledged by all.

Finally, the partition of British India into two — Pakistan and India — leading to the largest population transfer in human history contributed to the making of India. Between 1946 and 1951 nine million Hindus and Sikhs came to India and about six million Muslims left Indian territory for Pakistan. Four prominent groups came to India in the wake of Partition.

Sindhi Hindus numbering around two million are dispersed all over urban India mainly as prosperous traders and industrialists. The Sindhis are gradually losing their mother tongue and no part of India can now be identified as an exclusive Sindhi homeland. The Punjabi Sikhs and Hindus who came to India are also dispersed all over India but have a strong identification with Punjab as their homeland. The Bengali Hindus came from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and are also dispersed all over but with substantial concentration in West Bengal, Tripura and Assam. Of these, in the first two they are considered as insiders while in Assam they are viewed as outsiders. The partition of India has resulted in the vivisection of several 'nations' of undivided India. Thus there are two Punjabs, two Kashmirs, and two Bengals, the first two apportioned between India and Pakistan and the third between India and Bangladesh.

A COMPLEX SOCIETY

The long historical process described above has produced an extremely complex society, an amalgam of four basic dimensions: social stratification, cultural heterogeneity, caste hierarchy and religious plurality. There have been numerous attempts to analyse Indian society but they remain inadequate because usually one of these dimensions is highlighted, ignoring or neglecting other aspects. Indian society is stratified like all other societies based on class, gender, age, power and rural-urban disparities. But class and gender differences are rendered more complex because of their interpenetration with caste and religion. Thus the phenomenon of cumulative domination wherein caste, class, gender, religion, age and rural-urban variations conjointly render some categories (e.g. the upper caste, upper class, middle-aged urban Hindu male) absolutely dominant and other categories (e.g., lower caste, lower class, young, rural Muslim female) utterly dominated. An important indicator of social transformation in independent India is the shift from *cumulative* to *dispersed dominance*.

Dominance has not disappeared and in all probability it will not, ever. But dominance tends to become contextual and segmental as against all-pervasive and totalistic. For example, the class-caste correlation (high caste and high/middle class or low caste and low class) is gradually weakening, although it has not yet broken down. The demographically small upper castes used to have a disproportionately large representation in political and administrative bodies. This is fast disappearing due to universal adult franchise, dispersal of modern education and the policy of protective discrimination. The empirical

manifestation of this can be easily discerned in the political ascendancy of the numerically strong Other Backward Classes and the increased representation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in bureaucracy and professions. The declining political power of the upper castes, particularly the Brahmins, and the decrease in the proportion of their presence in professions and bureaucracy is the other side of the same coin.

Women's representation in professions and administration, although modest, has been in existence for some time either because of the class-caste-urban conjunction (in the case of upper caste, upper class, urban women) or because of the policy of reservations in the case of lower caste, middle class, urban women. But the political empowerment of women has only just begun at the grassroots with the recent reservation accorded to them at the Panchayat Raj level. In state legislatures and in Parliament, women's representation is far below their proportion in population. However, cumulative domination by men is gradually weakening. India is gradually becoming an 'open society'.

Cultural heterogeneity need not engender inequality but often does. It is quite conceivable that culturally different groups can be economically equal. But if some of the cultural groups are large and others small, and if some of these groups are legally privileged and others legally underprivileged, inequality between them is likely to ensue. In India the two bases of cultural differences which contribute to intergroup inequality are language and tribe.

India is a polyglot polity *par excellence* with more than a thousand mother tongues spoken in it. But only about sixty of the languages are spoken by 100,000 or more persons. Out of this, only 12 are spoken by 10,000,000 or more persons. Hindi is spoken by the largest number of people, nearly 300,000,000, constituting 38 per cent of the total population. The huge difference in numbers among people speaking different languages creates an instant inequality among them. The speakers of the tiny and/or 'underdeveloped' subaltern groups (tribes and peasants) are generally disadvantaged compared to those whose mother tongues are sophisticated and developed.

Two factors deepen the inequality between the speakers of different languages. The first is the constitutional recognition accorded to 18 languages (of which only two are subaltern). The second is the privileging of a few languages by providing them with their own territorial provinces. All the languages with 10,000,000 or more speakers (except Urdu, because it has no territory of its own) have their states. Most of the subaltern peoples are stateless save those which are at the inter-state borders. For example, the Nagas and Mizos have their own states but several of the tribes of Central India, Santals, Gonds, Bhils and so on, which are much bigger in size, are stateless. This creates inequality between linguistic groups with states and those without states.

The reorganization of Indian states based on language was a positive step

in the direction of homogeneity, decategorization and cultural uniformization. But these very steps have not been without their anticipated consequences viewed from the perspective of maintaining the integrity of Indian polity. The Indian Constitution emphatically adheres to the principle of single citizenship. But discriminatory prescriptions by most states for purposes of employment, admission to educational institutions, industrial licences and so on militate against the spirit of single citizenship. The many mobilizations by the 'sons of the soil' in different cultural regions all over India against those who do not belong to these regions also go against the notion of single citizenship. Thus while the principle of single citizenship promotes equality irrespective of nationality, language and tribe, the latter has a proclivity to prompt inter-group inequality. The current trend in social transformation in India is toward *destroying equality and identity simultaneously*.

Inequality arising out of heterogeneity is common to many societies. But inequality arising out of hierarchy is found only in a few societies. Indian society is a classic case of institutionalized inequality buttressed by the caste system. In traditional India, inequality was deeply entrenched through a five-fold categorization of the population — Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras and the 'Untouchables' — which was legitimized by the Hindu doctrine of the origin of man and the theory of karma and rebirth. This inequality rooted in the concept of ritual purity was reinforced in the socio-economic context by an elaborate social division of labour. The Indian Constitution with its foundational principle of equality irrespective of caste, creed and gender struck at the very root of this iniquitous system.

The five-fold division of the population referred to as the varna scheme, although an all-India framework, did vary across the linguistic regions. For example, the ritual superiority of Brahmins was reinforced by their secular dominance in some of the regions, notably Bengal, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu. But this was not so in the Punjab. Similarly, notwithstanding the ritual pre-eminence of Brahmins, their lifestyle was substantially different across regions. For example, while the Tamil Brahmins were traditionally strict vegetarians, neither the Bengali nor the Kashmiri Brahmins were so. Further, all the elements in the varna scheme were not present everywhere. For example, the Vaishya category was absent in Kerala. Finally, caste demography varied substantially across regions. In some of them, those of the fourth varna — the Shudras — far outnumbered all the other categories put together.

Some of these variations impacted on the process of social transformation. Thus the introduction of English education by the British was eagerly responded to in Brahmin-dominated areas. On the other hand, universal adult franchise, introduced in independent India, created an incremental revolution in those areas where the Shudras are numerically preponderant. Similarly, while modern occupations, professions and the top echelon of administration were practically monopolized by the first three varnas, particularly the Brahmins, thanks to the policy of protective discrimination

this monopoly has been broken and even the ex-Untouchables are getting increased representation.

The social transformation is taking place, however, at a very uneven pace on different scales. It is most striking in the practical arena conditioned by the empowerment of the Scheduled Other Backward Classes and the ex-Untouchables, Scheduled Caste and the Adivasis, Scheduled Tribes. While in the social domain it is fast becoming visible through the disengagement between caste and occupation, social transformation is very slow in the arena of ritual. Thus the practice of untouchability and caste based social discrimination persists more in rural areas as compared to urban. Also, the pace of transformation varies across regional linguistic areas. Generally speaking, the Hindi belt lags behind while some of the regions (for example, Kerala, Maharashtra) are moving ahead fast. In spite of these contradictions and inconsistencies, the broad trend in India today is a *movement from hierarchy to equality*.

The fourth distinctive feature of Indian society is its plurality. A society is plural when the internality of some of its constituent elements is questioned. In a hierarchical society even as inequality is institutionalized all the elements within it are accepted as internal to it. Thus, notwithstanding the utterly degrading status accorded to the 'Untouchables', they were not considered outsiders to Indian society. In contrast, heterogeneity buttresses the insider-outsider dichotomy as we have noted in the case of the sons-of-the-soil ideology and the mobilizations based on it. But this insider-outsider dichotomy pertains to particular categories: Tamilians versus Maharashtrians, Adivasis versus non-Adivasis and so on, *within* Indian society. As against this, there is a category of people who are perceived and constructed as outsiders to and the Other of Indian society as a whole.

The construction of this insider-outsider dichotomy is based on a corresponding one between religions originating in India and alien religions. The religions of Indian origin are Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism and their numerous sects. The alien religions are the Bahai faith, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Islam. Of these the followers of the last two are cognized as 'outsiders' for the following reasons. First, they are constructed as products of conquests (Islam) and colonialism (Christianity); *constructed* because pre-conquest Islam and pre-colonial Christianity did exist in India, as noted earlier. Second, they are proselytizing religions, although some of the religions of Indian origin too (e.g. Buddhism) indulge in proselytization.

In the case of Muslims, the situation is further complicated by several factors. (1) They are allegedly responsible for the division of India; (2) India's relations with its two neighbouring Muslim-majority states are not cordial; (3) Muslims constitute a substantial minority of 12 per cent, presently numbering about 120 million, and hence have substantial political clout; (4) the persisting contention about the political status of Kashmir valley.

The plural character of Indian society is being moderated through the

status of single members. Counting is an expression of respect or esteem and precluded the public recognition of those persons excluded, including women. Another consequence of the problem on the part of a system of social status is the loss of the status of those who are excluded based on their physical attributes. The Indian Commission seems to reply to all women's claims through a non-recognizable process and procedure of work since the Commission's primary purpose is to protect the maximum of all groups in the polity. The Indian system of authority is radically different from the western system in that it is based to some extent respect to all subjects. Thus, in principle, constitutes the social hierarchy religious leaders and religious customs. Thus, an important trait of social transformation in India is the movement from pluralism to a system that is the dignified co-existence of all groups within the polity.

ENDOGENOUS FACTORS

So far the discussion has focused on the special features of Indian society and the factors to which its social transformation is due. It may be designated as the endogenous source of social transformation but there is a set of exogenous factors of social transformation which may be as a series of 'izations' — modernization, politicalization, democratization, secularization, bureaucratization and development. These 'izations' impinged on the structure of Indian society and produced two massively powerful forces — individualism and rationalization of the institutions of state and social society.

One of the important features of traditional Indian society was the primacy of the group or community over the individual. This may be designated as collectivism which manifests itself in the values embedded in the institutions of marriage, joint family, caste, *jajmani*, traditional panchayats (caste and village), religious customs, property ownership and the like. What was common to all these institutions was the value of collectivism. Thus marriage was not a union between two consenting individuals but an alliance between two families, the individual's obligations to the joint family created familial communism ignoring the individual's rights, the caste system upheld the interests of the collectivity constricting individual freedom, the *jajmani* system knitted occupational groups into a niche upholding the self-sufficiency of the village community, the traditional caste and village panchayats processed disputes and adjudicated cases keeping in mind the autonomy of caste and village rather than the entitlements of individuals; religious customs articulated in civil codes invariably ignored individual autonomy but upheld the integrity of religion; the communal pattern of ownership in property inhibited individual initiatives.

When the 'izations' referred to above were introduced into Indian society the value-orientation embedded in collectivism was gradually eroded but not

completely replaced by individualism. However, in the modern industrial urban sector, individualism is more evident as compared to the agrarian rural sector. Similarly, while the joint family ethic persists in rural India, individualism is fast becoming visible in upper-middle-class urban families. The functional reach of the traditional caste and village panchayats is shrinking. While they retain their authority in relation to canonical rituals, people turn to statutory village panchayats and the judiciary in matters relating to the 'secular' realm. The ritual relevance of the caste system is eroding but its political and economic importance is becoming salient, as is evident in the context of electoral behaviour and politics, as well as caste-based assertions regarding collective rights to employment. A growing section from all religious communities opts for civil codes which emphasize individual freedoms and entitlements. In a nutshell the tempo of social transformation is *from collectivism to individualism*.

When India became a politically free country there were two models to be emulated. One was the 'liberal' model making for the gradual evolution of a society in which the state, the market and civil society were autonomous but interdependent. In contrast to this was the 'socialist' society in which the state not only occupied the central position but the autonomy of the market and civil society was substantially curbed. While India did not adopt either of these models, it attempted to combine the two by adopting planned economic development from the socialist model and multi-party democracy from the liberal model. But as economic planning and social legislations were the chief instruments of bringing about social transformation, Indian society remained largely state-centric in the first four decades of Independence. In fact, state centism was reinforced by market forces through the articulation of the concept of 'economic nationalism' which crystallized during the *anti-colonial struggle*.

The Bombay Plan of 1944 conceived by a few Indian industrialists wanted state intervention in planning, financing and in managing industrial development. This 'economic nationalism' of the big bourgeoisie promoted *state intervention*.

Thus the Indian national state which succeeded the colonial state started with adequate legitimacy as an agent of economic intervention and development. Understandably, it initiated a series of measures to achieve this objective. The most important measures were the institution of the Planning Commission in March 1950 and the passing of the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act of 1950. The first was an instrument to initiate the process of long-term economic development and the second was intended to curb monopolistic tendencies and to avoid wastes emanating from undesirable competition between private industrial houses.

The Industrial Policy Resolution of 1956 sectoralized Indian industries into public and private, reserving investments in basic and heavy industries for the public sector, which eventually came to occupy the 'commanding

business of the economy. But the real problem was that the public sector in India was plagued by a lack of social values, namely that as an economic vehicle, it expected to compete with the private sector for the attainment of modest profits. On the other hand, the Companies Act was amended in 1960 to reduce the control of financial institutions over industrial corporations. This was followed by the abolition of the Monopolies and Restrictive Practices Act and the nationalization of commercial banks in 1969. Following close on the heels of this was the passage of the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act of 1970 which prescribed that big business houses needed to take the government's permission to expand their enterprises. Further, the share of foreign investment in Indian companies was restricted to 49 per cent of equity capital. Finally, stringent rules for the repatriation of profits and on foreign exchange transactions were introduced through the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act of 1973. Truly, India's was a license-permit Raj.

The State was thus an active actor in the affairs of the Indian economy from 1947 till 1990. The announced aim of this involvement was to bring about economic development and distributive justice. But neither of these goals has been achieved. According to the Economic Survey of 1994-5 the rate of return from public sector enterprises remains a measly 3 per cent. The restrictions put on private companies did not produce the intended results as licensing favoured big business houses. On the other hand, in spite of the emphasis on distributive justice, not only did the disparity between the rich and the poor grow, but even the absolute proportion of the population below the poverty line increased. These developments justified the liberalization of the economy, thereby conceding autonomy to the market.

The State in India wanted to retain its centrality not only in initiating planned economic development but also in launching and sustaining civil society. Although one-party dominance persisted for most of the time in independent India, India did not become a one-party state or usurp the space of civil society. Therefore, it is no surprise that by the 1970s one witnessed a proliferation of organizations which started interrogating the state when it tended to become authoritarian. While some of these organizations are not explicitly anti-State, quite a few are. Further, some are neither anti-nor pro-State but object to the consequences of State-initiated 'destructive development' leading to the ravaging of ecology and the environment. The prominent new collective actors are women, Dalits, Adivasis, religious minorities, the rural poor, urban slum dwellers, environmentalists, and so on. They heralded a new beginning and manifested a new stirring — an emerging vibrant civil society. However, it would not be correct to say that civil society emerged in India only a quarter of a century after it attained political freedom. In fact, the Indian 'national' state and India's civil society are twins, if by the latter one denotes a separate space of activity independent of the former. This may be illustrated by invoking the example of the Gandhian movement.

The Gandhian movement had two specific objectives: *Swaraj* (self rule) and *Sarvodaya* (uplift of all). With the exit of the colonial rulers and the advent of the national State, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi wanted that the Indian National Congress (INC) should dissolve itself and be reconstituted as a body of volunteers for the social reconstruction of India. But this proposal was not acceptable to most and the original INC split into two — one part becoming a political party with the same name and the other evolving into a movement — *Sarvodaya*.

The most important post-Gandhian programme of the *Sarvodaya* movement was the *Bhoodan* (land gift) movement initiated by Vinoba Bhave — an acknowledged disciple of Gandhi — which addressed the most crucial problem of rural India namely, providing the ownership of and control over land to the tillers. The Gandhian movement, while it functioned independently of all political parties, was not anti-State and pursued its objective with the help and co-operation of the State until the time internal Emergency was declared in June 1975. During the Emergency, Vinoba Bhave took a vow of silence and refused to articulate his views on the abridgement of democratic rights by the State. On the other hand, Jayaprakash Narayan, another distinguished Gandhian, openly opposed the State and launched a militant non-violent struggle. This necessarily led to (a) the second split of the movement and (b) the suppression of the anti-State struggle by the state.

In India, the process of autonomization of the different spheres began with the challenge posed by civil society to the State. While the autonomization of civil society was partially inspired by the Western model, the trajectory of this process was different. The last sphere to acquire autonomy is the market and its autonomization is occurring under conditions of globalization. In turn, the autonomy gained by the three different spheres is also getting curbed. The worst affected in terms of the erosion of autonomy indeed is the market, followed by the state, with civil society being the least affected.

The process of autonomization is likely to produce new alliances between the different spheres. The state and civil society may become allies on certain issues and in certain contexts, for example the protection of the interests of consumers or that of the poor. Similarly the market and civil society may have to confront the State conjointly when it fails to protect human rights. Finally, the State and the market may come together to 'punish' civil society when it tends to become 'fundamentalist'. The point is that none of these actors — State, civil society, market — is likely to remain beyond blemish and therefore privileging any one of them *vis-à-vis* the rest would be rash and an unsustainable pre-judgment. Indeed, only an equipoise between them can produce a 'good society'. *The process of autonomization occurring in Indian society is an indicator of this.*

Minorities: Many-splendoured Contributions

India is a country of bewildering diversity. No single community can claim the entire credit for the richness of its culture and traditions. India has inherited a composite culture both in the North and South, thanks to the contribution of various religious and cultural communities. Despite this diversity India has maintained its unity. Those who led the freedom struggle, always felt proud of this and reiterated its character as 'Unity in Diversity'.

The classical model of an European nation is mono religious, mono-lingual and mono-cultural. The very basis of nationhood in Europe was one language and culture. In this sense India is multi-national in character. There is bewildering diversity on every front — linguistic, cultural or religious. And it has been historically so. India has never been a nation in the classical sense. Yet our leaders performed the miracle of carving out a modern nation from a multi-lingual, multi-religious and multi-cultural country. Indians can justly be proud of this. In fact we have made diversity our virtue and strength. In Western countries pluralism has been accepted only in the post-modernist era. The United States of America used to take pride in what it called the 'melting-pot model' of nation building. All those who migrated to North America discarded their original European identity and constructed a new American identity. Thus diversity was considered undesirable and mono-culturalism a great virtue. But this was possible as long as the migrants were mainly from European (Western) civilization. When in the post-Second World War or post-colonial era the migration to USA took place more from Asian and African countries, the melting-pot model had to be replaced by the mosaic model. However, India has for centuries adopted the mosaic model. And it is this which has given its society so much richness and colour. All religious and cultural communities **have contributed richly to Indian society.**

Here I discuss contributions made by various religious minorities to the Indian nation in various fields — political, economic and cultural — particularly in the post-Independence era. However, before venturing to discuss the matter we must understand the concept of a 'minority'. There is a great deal of controversy about the concept of a minority. Many scholars maintain that in a democracy there could be only a political majority and minorities, not religious ones. These scholars refuse to entertain the concept of religious minorities in a liberal democracy like India.

These scholars may have a point. But this is possible only when we have a perfect liberal democracy, that is, when religion has no role to play in our political or social life. However, that is a distant dream. We cannot conceive of a society in the near future in which religion does not deeply influence social, political and cultural lives. Also, we have our own historical legacy which cannot be wished away. We had major conflicts between Hindus and Muslims on the question of sharing power (i.e. in the political arena) and our country was divided. Thus the communal question has become part of our historical legacy and the concepts of religious minority and majority have their own dynamics.

The framers of our Constitution were well aware of this legacy and hence the concept of religious minorities was accepted in good faith and certain special rights were guaranteed to them in the Constitution in Articles 25 to 30. Article 25 says that 'subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice and propagate religion'. Similarly Article 26 guarantees freedom to manage religious affairs, and Article 29 takes care of rights of cultural and linguistic minorities. Article 30, on the other hand, gives cultural and linguistic minorities the right to **establish their own institutions.**

MODEL FOR OTHER COUNTRIES

Thus it will be seen that the Constitution of India recognizes both religious as well as cultural and linguistic minorities. In fact the Constitution of India has set a model in matters of minority rights which could be followed by other countries. Even Britain does not have adequate laws to take care of its Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist minorities. British society has yet to come to grips with the problem of its religious minorities. There are quite a few discriminatory laws against which religious minorities, especially the Muslims, are protesting. Now even the United Nations Organisation has accepted the need for a charter of minority rights, which it adopted in December 1992. In the post-colonial period there is no country in the world which does not have one religious minority or other.

Another question concerns the definition of minority. There are different types of minorities apart from religious or linguistic and cultural ones — for example, dominant or dominated minorities. A religious, cultural or linguistic minority can be dominant or dominated. Similarly an economic minority — usually the feudal or capitalist class — dominates a majority and this feudal or capitalist class may be coterminous with a particular religion or culture. The Muslims in pre-British India, for example, were a feudal ruling class. Yet in a religious sense they were a small minority. And this had its own consequences. In fact when a dominant minority becomes a dominated minority it faces serious consequences. And there lies the negative fallout of the communal question.

Having been a part of the freedom struggle, the minority problems were close to our hearts. In the pre-Independence period, the Congress was not in a position to take the post-Independence period of Anglo-Muslim relations seriously. It was not just Muslims in our country — Muslims, Parsis, Christians, Sikhs and Buddhists. As for Jains, there is some controversy. A section of Jains wants their community to be deemed a minority, while the other section is particular about it. The National Movement Committee of India has recently a commendable decision. Government of India has not yet decided to recognise Jains as a minority. But the Congress had not taken a decision in this regard.

COMPOSITE CULTURE

One cannot think of any religious community which did not participate in India's freedom struggle. The Indian National Congress, in fact, was an umbrella organisation and it threw open its membership to all communities. Right at its inception in 1885, people of all religious communities joined it. In fact its first three presidents came from minority communities: Badruddin Tyabji, a Muslim from Bombay, W. S. Bonerjee, a Christian from Bengal, and Dadabhai Naoroji, a Parsi from Bombay. All these communities made tremendous sacrifices throughout the freedom struggle, besides richly contributing to India's emerging democratic political culture.

It is important to note that not only modern, educated Muslims but also the orthodox 'Ulama, theologians of the Deoband school, lent vigour to the freedom struggle by their participation. There is a list of illustrious names from Maulana Mahmudul Hasan (of Silk Kerchief conspiracy) to Maulana Husain Ahmed Madani who actively participated in the freedom struggle. Maulana Husain Ahmed Madani's role is particularly commendable both in the pre-Independence and post-Independence period.

Maulana Husain Ahmed Madani vehemently opposed the two nation theory. In fact he wrote a book in Urdu, *Muttahida Qaumiyat aur Islam* (Composite Nationalism and Islam) and proved by quoting chapter and verse from the Qur'an that there was no justification for the two-nation theory in the Qur'an. He also quoted *Misq-e-Madina*, the Prophet's treaty with the people of Madina in which He set up a composite state with the help of Jews, Christians Pagan tribes and Muslims, giving each community and tribe full freedom to practise its own religion or tribal customs, and co-operate with one another to run the city state of Madina and protect it from aggression. It was, in fact, a powerful argument not only to counter the two-nation theory but also to build a modern, independent and secular India.

Maulana Husain Ahmed Madani, who was the rector of the Islamic seminary of Deoband, died in 1962 and continued, through his written and spoken words, to support secular, composite political democracy in India. He urged upon Muslims to wholeheartedly participate in the political processes and provided religious justification for this participation. In fact in the

post-Partition period Muslims in India needed encouragement from religious divines like Maulana Madani to regain their confidence and to become full partners in the political process. They looked at the concept of the secular state, translated in Urdu as *ladini* (irreligious) with suspicion. The Maulana explained to them that they could practise their religion without fear and that the state will not interfere. This was all the more necessary as the Muslim League propaganda had created unease in the minds of Muslims. Thus Maulana Husain Ahmed Madani's services in the nation-building process were invaluable. Jawaharlal Nehru paid rich tribute to him on his death in 1962. He made a moving funeral speech.

Another outstanding personality was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He was a great Islamic thinker and commentator on the holy Qur'an from the perspective of a composite secular society. Many commentaries have been written on the Qur'an from different perspectives but the Maulana's commentary has a special significance as it helps promote respect for all religions and strengthens the secular basis of Indian polity. Maulana Azad devoted considerable space to the concept of *Wahdat-e-Din*, that is, the unity of religion, which is highly supportive of our multi-religious society. This commentary, though written in pre-Independence India, is still read with great interest and continues to wield considerable influence and goes a long way in strengthening our composite culture.

Jawaharlal Nehru says in his *The Discovery of India*.

The Al-Hilal was started by Abul Kalam Azad (the present Congress President), a brilliant young man of twenty-four, who had received his early education in Al Azhar University of Cairo, and, while yet in his teens, had become well-known for his Arabic and Persian scholarship and deep learning. To this he added a knowledge of the Islamic world outside India and of the reform movements that were coursing through it, as well as of European developments. Rationalist in outlook and yet profoundly versed in Islamic lore and history, he interpreted scripture from a rationalist point of view. Soaked in Islamic tradition and with many personal contacts with prominent Moslem leaders and reformers in Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Iraq and Iran, he was powerfully affected by political and cultural developments in these Islamic countries. Because of his writings he was known in the Islamic countries probably more than any other Indian Moslem.

A SCHOLAR AND A STATESMAN

Maulana Azad became the first Education Minister of India. He more than deserved to hold this important portfolio in view of his learning. Though Maulana Azad did not receive modern education in a Western university like many of his colleagues, he, as pointed out by Nehru, had a remarkable breadth of vision and put higher education on a sound footing. He also took steps

to encourage scientific and technological research in post-Independence India. He was appointed to the Scientific and Technological Research Council for this purpose. One of its early directors was Husein Ziaee, a noted scientist from Iran. In addition he was assisted by an able secretary, Khwaja Ghulam As-Sayidien. In fact, he was an eminent educationist in his own right. He had assisted Dr Zia ul-Husain in preparing the Wardha Scheme of basic education at the instance of Gandhiji. He left his own impress in shaping the policy for higher education in India.

Maulana Azad was totally opposed to the very concept of Pakistan. He staunchly believed in composite nationalism. He told a group of Muslims from Uttar Pradesh, who were bound for Pakistan:

You are leaving your motherland. Do you know what the consequences will be. Your presence elsewhere is that it will weaken the Muslims of India. A time may come, when the various Pakistani regions start asserting their separate identities. Bengali, Punjabi, Sindhi, Balochi may declare themselves separate *ummas*. Will your position in Pakistan at that time be anything better than that of uninvited guests? The Hindu can be your religious opponent but not your regional and national opponent. You can deal with this situation. But in Pakistan, at any time you may have to face regional and national opposition, before this kind of opposition you will be helpless.

And helpless they are today. The Muhajirs (immigrants from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar) today are facing exactly the situation the Maulana predicted. They have become unwanted guests and are at the receiving end. The Maulana could visualize this and had warned the Muslims in time.

However, for the Muslims in India he was quite optimistic. He told the students of Aligarh Muslim University in a convocation address,

I am not aware what the state of your minds is today, nor in what colours the future appears to you. Does it bring it to you the message of closing doors or opening gates that introduce you to new vistas of experience? I do not know what visions are before you, but I will tell you what visions I see. You perhaps feel that doors that were open have been closed. I see that doors that were closed have now opened What you and I hear are different. You hear the sound of closing doors but I of doors open.

To Muslims in Delhi in 1947 who were feeling intensely insecure due to the Partition riots he said: 'Stars may have plummeted down but the sun is still shining. Borrow a few of its rays and sprinkle them in the dark caverns of your lives.' No doubt this message gave them great cheer. He also wanted Muslims to 'pledge that this country is ours, we belong to it; and any fundamental decision about its destiny will remain incomplete without our consent.'

It will thus be seen that Maulana Azad infused a new confidence among

the battered Muslims and gave them a new vision and made them too an integral part of India. Thus, by any yardstick, his was a seminal contribution to building modern India with an emphasis on its composite culture.

Another stalwart Muslim politician who contributed greatly to building modern India was Rafi Ahmad Qidwai. He too had unflinching faith in composite nationalism. He played an important part in putting the national system in post-Independence India on a sound footing and also declared Sunday a postal holiday. Jawaharlal Nehru always valued his sound judgement and consulted him on many important matters.

Many other eminent Ulama belonging to Jamiat-ul-Ulama-i-Hind like Maulana Hitzur Rehman and Mufi Atiqur Rehman played important roles in post-Independence India in shaping a positive Muslim outlook and preparing Muslims mentally to accept the secular foundations of India on Islamic bases. The Jamiat-ul-Ulama, it is interesting to note, always stood for composite nationalism and completely rejected the two-nation theory. It still continues to do so. In this respect the role of the Deoband Islamic seminary has been very important.

MUSLIM PRESIDENTS

Next to Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Maulana Husain Ahmed Madani stood Dr Zakir Husain — a highly learned and cultured person. Unlike Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Dr Zakir Husain was a person with modern education who did his Ph.D. from Germany and, as pointed out above, was closely associated with Mahatma Gandhi in evolving the Wardha Scheme of Basic Education. His faith in composite nationalism was as unshakeable as that of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and his contribution to building modern contemporary India is second to none.

Dr Zakir Husain was a very eminent educationist and built up Jamia Millia Islamia, the nationalist university founded during the Caliphate movement with great devotion and commitment. Today it has flowered into a full-fledged central university. He was its vice-chancellor for many years until he was called upon by Maulana Azad to take the responsibility of vice-chancellorship at Aligarh Muslim University. He discharged his duties there with great distinction until he was appointed governor of Bihar. He was elected Vice-President of India and then to the august office of President. He was a simple but highly devout person who discharged his duties in all the offices he held with commitment and honesty and integrity.

Another distinguished personality was Fakhruddin Ali Ahmad, who held various positions at the Centre. He belonged to the distinguished family of Ghalib, one of the most eminent Urdu poets. He also rose to be the President of India and discharged his duties with ability and commitment to the national cause. His wife Abida Ahmad has been active on many social fronts and has worked for many causes. Justice M. Hidayatullah, who became Chief

Justice of the Supreme Court and then Vice President of India has left his mark on the M.L.A. Chaudhry A. Ghulam Nabi Jodhpuri who became Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court, Chief Justice of Madras and became Minister of Education at the Centre. The first woman of India has been Minister, the last one so far being Justice A.M. Ahmadi.

From amongst many minorities Zai Singh, a Sikh politician from Punjab, became Home Minister for the Union Government and later the President of India. Coming to Muslims, Sikhs are a small minority — less than three per cent of the national population — but have contributed significantly to various fields. In fact, in northern India Punjab is the foremost state in wheat production, and it is the Sikh country which worked very hard to make the Green Revolution a great success.

THE ARMED FORCES

The Sikhs have discharged themselves with great distinction in the armed forces. One cannot think of the Indian Army without Sikh soldiers and officers. They have fought with outstanding valour and courage in all military operations India has had to conduct since Independence. Air Chief Marshal Arjan Singh headed the Indian Air Force which gave a brilliant account of itself during the 1965 war with Pakistan. The Indian Army which liberated Bangladesh in December 1971, was commanded by another Sikh, Lt.-Gen. Jagjit Singh Arora. In fact the instances of Sikh valour and leadership in India's defence are so numerous that mentioning each one of them individually is beyond the scope of any single essay like the present one.

Among the other communities, Field Marshal S.H.F. J. Manekshaw, Chief of Army Staff during the 1971 war with Pakistan, and one of the most outstanding soldiers India has produced, is a Parse; another Parse, Air Chief Marshal M.M. Engineer, was the Chief of Air Staff. In the 1965 war with Pakistan, Lt.-Col. A.B. Tarapore was posthumously awarded the Param Vir Chakra, the highest medal for gallantry in wartime. India has also had a number of distinguished Christian officers like General S.F. Rodrigues, who was Chief of Army Staff, Air Chief Marshal Denis LaFontaine, who was Chief of the Air Staff, Lt.-Gen. I.P. Sen, Lt.-Gen. Henderson-Brookes, Lt.-Gen. K.P. Candeth and Air Marshal Denzil Keelor. Air Marshal Keelor and his brother, Trevor, who took premature retirement as Wing Commander, won Vir Chakras during the 1965 war with Pakistan. Wg. Cdr. Keelor was the first person to shoot down a Pakistani fighter plane in that war.

Lt.-Gen. J.F.R. Jacob, who retired as Commander of the Eastern Command, and who is now the Governor of Mizoram, is a Jew. There have not been very many Muslims in the Armed Forces but the record is a distinguished one. Air Chief Marshal I.H. Latif, who retired as the Chief of Air Staff, later became the Governor of Maharashtra. Air Marshal J. Zaheer was another distinguished officer who rose high. Lt.-Gen. Sami Khan and Maj.-Gen. Afsir

Karim have distinguished themselves in the Army. Muslims have been second to none in laying their lives down for the country. Brig. Mohammad Osman, who was killed on the Kashmir front, was among the earliest of them. Company Quartermaster Havildar Abul Hamid was posthumously awarded the Param Vir Chakra in the 1965 war with Pakistan. During the same war Major Qamar Sheikh was posthumously awarded the Vir Chakra. More recently Major B.S. Ibrahim was killed in action against foreign mercenaries in Kashmir after displaying outstanding gallantry.

THE CULTURAL SPHERE

Nor has the contribution by minorities been any less in the more peaceful world of culture. Take Urdu literature, for example. Urdu, I must say is by itself an excellent example of what came to be known in the north as *Ganga-Jamini tabzib*, which has become synonymous with the equivalent of composite culture. This language imbibes the best cultural traditions of Hinduism and Islam. Litterateurs belonging to different religions — Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Jains have contributed greatly to the richness of this language. Munshi Premchand, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Krishen Chandra, Daya Sankar Naseem, Chakbast, Tilakchand Mehroom, Jagannath Azad and Firaq Gorakhpuri are among them. They are highly revered for their creative contributions.

Urdu poets like Mir Taqi Mir, Ghalib, Faiz and Iqbal rank with some of the best poets the world has seen. Ghalib has been compared with Goethe of Weimar in Germany. Currently his second birth centenary is being celebrated. Urdu, which itself is a unique minority contribution, has continued to enrich Indian literature in the post-Independence period. Poets like Sardar Jafri, Majrooh Sultanpuri, Jan Nisar Akhtar, Sahir Ludhyanvi, Majaz, Kaifi Azmi, Shaharyar, Nida Fazli, Javed Akhtar and several others have been outstanding. Bekal Utsahi has also made a name in writing Urdu *geets* in a language which is a creative mix of Urdu and Hindi. Sardar Jafri was recently given the Gyanpeeth Award for his rich contribution to Indian poetry. Earlier Shamsur Rehman Farouqui, a noted literary critic, was awarded the Saraswati Samman two years ago for his outstanding work in literary criticism.

Nor is the signature of minorities like Muslims, Christians and so on less prominent in the literature of other Indian languages. Professor Pathan from Marathwada University has done commendable work on saint poets of Maharashtra. He has won several Marathi literary awards for his seminal contribution. He also presided over Marathi Sahitya Sammelan which is considered a rare honour. Similarly Justice Ismail from Chennai is a renowned writer in the Tamil language. M.T. Khan from Hyderabad is considered a noted Telugu writer. Sara Abubacker has her own place in Kannada literature. Her Kannada novels are rated quite highly. Ghulam Dastgir Birajdar from Maharashtra is a great Sanskrit scholar and is highly respected

for the Urdu literature of the 19th C. One of the great Bengali poets of all times was Mir Taqi Mir. Mir Jafar Durr, who became a Christian, Quaid Nazim Iqbal, the very primary poet, was a Muslim who married a Hindu. Among well-known contemporary writers of Bengali fiction are Syed Abulhasan Ali, who has won the Sahitya Akademi award, Nazim Iqbal, a highly respected officer of the Indian Police Service. Earlier Syed Mujtaba Ali had become a household name.

The minorities have left a distinguished imprint in virtually all areas of film making, including directing, acting, dialogue writing and screenplay, music and playback singing in independent India. In fact some scholars have theorized that the minorities, especially the Muslims, have made much greater contributions to films and sports, deprived as they have been in the field of business, industries and related professions. Theodore Wright Jr., a political scientist from the United States, has compared the Muslim contribution to the world of sports and films in India with that of the African American contribution to sports and music in the United States. There is a degree of truth in this assertion. Of course this does not apply to all the minorities as **there are minorities and minorities.**

Mehboob Khan became a legendary figure both in the production and direction of films. His film *Mother India* was a great hit and is considered a classic. He also established his own studio in which several memorable films were made. Kamal Amrohi was respected as the producer and director of many well-known films like *Durga*. And of course there have been many lesser directors belonging to the Muslim community. Sohrab Modi, a Parsi, was another producer and director of great repute. He made many grand historical films like *Purana*. He also made a memorable film on the Independence movement. He himself was a great actor besides being a producer and director. I.B.H. Wadia, another Parsi, was a famous producer.

In the field of acting Dilip Kumar (Yusuf Khan) is a legendary figure. He is one of the greatest actors in Hindi films, held in high public esteem and difficult to replace. Also, there have been several other minority actors and comedians like Johnny Walker, Mehmood, Muqri and character actors like Rahman, Iftekhar and others. David, a Jew, is another great actor: his performance has been unforgettable in several films, particularly in the films made by Raj Kapoor. There have also been actresses like Suraiya, Meena Kumari, Nargis, Nimmi, Madhubala, Waheeda Rehman, Mumtaz, Tabassum, Shabana Azmi and others. Suraiya was not only an actress but also a **singer of great repute.**

Meena Kumari carved out her own niche in Hindi films. She became a legend in her own lifetime. Many films became great hits at the box office only because of her acting, even if the story did not have much substance. Though she met with a tragic end she left a deep impress on the Indian film world. Nargis also performed in many well-known films and some of her roles are memorable. Madhubala was celebrated for her flawless beauty.

Waheeda Rehman also gave several good performances. Shabana Azmi is comparatively new but has given excellent performances in several films. She has carved out her own niche and is now a Member of Parliament.

Among playback singers Suraiya, Shamshud Begum, Mohammad Rafi and Talat Mahmood can hardly be matched. Mohammad Rafi particularly has made a permanent place for himself among playback singers. Talat Mahmood has made a significant contribution to the singing of ghazals. Among song-writers Majrooh Sultanpuri, Kaifi Azmi, Sahir Ludhianvi, Shakeel, Hasrat Jaipuri and others are widely known and appreciated. Majrooh, who is still writing and is quite popular, has perhaps the largest number of songs to his credit, and many of them are excellent.

Among music directors, Naushad is now the doyen. His contribution has accounted for the outstanding success of several films. Recently another music director, A.R. Rahman from Chennai, has hit the film world. He has also composed a highly popular tune for the song *Vande Mataram* which is on the lips of people throughout India.

The minorities have also contributed richly to classical music. Who has not been enchanted by Bismillah Khan's playing of the *shehnai* and Allarakha's and Zakir Husain's playing of the *tabla*, Ustad Alauddin Khan's, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan's and Ustad Amjad Ali Khan's playing of the *sarod*? Or Hafiz Khan's and Faiyyaz Khan's and Amir Khan's and Bade Ghulam Ali Khan's vocal rendition of classical *ragas*?

In the fine arts, Ghulam Sheikh of Baroda, Tyeb Mehta, S.H. Raza and M.F. Hussain of Mumbai have international reputations; Jehangir Sabavala and Gieve Patel are both Parsis. In theatre Habib Tanvir and Naseeruddin Shah have carved their own places in the Hindi plays, and persons like Jabbar Patel have left their imprint on the Marathi stage. Both Habib Tanvir and Jabbar Patel are recognized as great directors in the world of Hindi and Marathi theatre respectively. Safdar Hashmi was known for his street plays and was murdered when his troupe, which had gone to perform in aid of trade union activists, was attacked by roughnecks in Gaziabad. The Sahmat Trust, set up to perpetuate his memory, has been active in promoting secular values in the country.

In the world of science too the contribution of the minorities has been quite significant. Dr Homi Bhabha, the father of India's nuclear programme, was a Parsi; Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, who played a crucial role in the nuclear explosion in Pokhran in May 1998, and in developing India's missile programme as scientific adviser to the Government of India, is a Muslim.

In the field of journalism too Muslims and other minorities have given several eminent journalists to this country. Mr Bareilvi who was editor of *Bombay Chronicle* before Independence was a very eminent journalist. He was also one of the founding members of the Bombay Union of journalists. He was a staunch nationalist. In contemporary India we have several eminent journalists in almost all Indian languages. In English journalism persons like

Iqbal Masud, M. I. Akbar, Zafar Agha, Seena Mustata, Saima Yousaf, M. Nikhat Kazim, Saieda Momin and others have been making significant contributions. Most of these journalists belong to the younger generation.

In the world of sports the contribution of minorities is no less significant. The minorities have produced great cricketers like Mashiq Ali, Nawab Htikhar Ali Khan Patodi and his son Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi, Ashraf Ayub, Farooq Engineer, Abid Ali, Syed Khamani, Mohammad Azharuddin, Ghulam Ahmed, Gai Mohammad, Abbas Ali Baig and Salim Durani. Also, Bishan Singh Bedi, Roger Bunny, N. J. Contractor, Polly Umrigar and Maninder Singh have been great cricket players. In football one recalls names like Naveemuddin, Mohammad Habib, Ahmed Khan, Taj Mohammad, P. B. H. Saich and others. Jarnail Singh is also a well known football player. In hockey Aslam Sher Khan will be difficult to forget, as will be Sikh players like Pargat Singh and Prithpal Singh, and a Christian, Leslie Claudius. As athletes, several Sikhs like Milkha Singh have won medals for India. In billiards Wilson Jones and Michael Ferreira have been among the top in the world. In tennis, it is Leander Paes, a Christian.

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

The minority contribution in commerce and industry has been enormous. Prominent among them have been the Parsis, a minuscule fringe — 60,000 in all — of India's vast population. The Tatas, particularly, have played a crucial role in India's industrialization. Godrej and Nusli Wadia have also made a very significant contribution. M. S. Oberoi has established his chain of five-star hotels not only in India but also abroad. Among other Sikhs, the important names include those of Bhai Mohan Singh, Ranaq Singh, Gurpreet Singh.

Muslims, the largest minority in India, have not been in the forefront of business and industrial activity for historical reasons. The ruling classes among them were feudal and had no tradition in these areas since the medieval period. On the other hand there were converted Muslims who were mostly artisans from lower castes in urban areas and the peasantry in rural areas. So a business culture never developed among Indian Muslims; of course in Gujarat there were three communities, the Khojas, Bohras and Memons, who were traditionally merchants. A few among them who had taken to modern industries, banking, insurance and shipping, had migrated to Pakistan as they thought they would not be able to compete with their formidable Hindu counterparts in India. But on the whole the bourgeoisie was extremely weak among Indian Muslims. Nevertheless in independent India some industrialists have come up like the Sherwani group which owns the Geep Industries. There are the Rainbow Inks and Ahmed Umar Oil Mills and so on in Mumbai. Also, quite a number of artisans in various urban areas, particularly in North India, have set up their own businesses and are doing well.

While the minorities have made significant contributions in all fields of life after Independence, they also face many problems, particularly the Muslims. The Muslims complain about discrimination against them, particularly in government jobs. The representation of Muslims in the Indian Administrative Service is quite meagre — less than 3 per cent, though their population today stands at 12.12 per cent, according to the 1991 census. But many Muslim civil servants like Salman Haider, who rose to be Foreign Secretary, **have done extremely well.**

At all levels in government services the Muslim representation is far below the percentage of their population. This is not only due to discrimination against them but also on account of lack of education. A special drive is needed both on the part of Muslims as well as on the part of the government **to spread education among them.**

POOR AND BACKWARD

The Muslim community as a whole languishes in poverty, illiteracy and backwardness. The data on rural India released by the Government of India on the basis of a 1991 survey shows their extreme backwardness. They are on par with Dalits and in some cases even behind them. No sincere efforts have been made to improve their condition. The artisans living in urban areas could improve their situation considerably if proper efforts were made by governmental agencies to update their skills and provide them with loans to be financially viable. H.N. Bahuguna, the former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh (UP), set up the UP Brassware Corporation which helped the brass workers of Moradabad tremendously and brought a measure of prosperity **to Muslim artisans of the district.**

The Narasimha Rao government set up a minority financial corporation with an initial capital of Rs 500 crore but nothing much has been heard ever since. Also the government has given Rs 70 crore to the Maulana Azad Education society, specially for education and self-employment of Muslim women, and it has benefited many of them. There is a lot of talent among Muslims which needs to be tapped. Indira Gandhi had set up the Gopal Singh Powered Commission to study and recommend measures for the betterment of Muslims and Dalits. The commission made many important recommendations which would have tremendously benefited both Muslims and Dalits. However, the will to implement these has been lacking in the governmental machinery. Muslim artisans can make significant contributions in boosting exports if proper facilities are made available to them.

Muslim representation in state legislative assemblies and Parliament is disproportionately low compared with the size of their population. In the current Parliament, the total number of Muslim MPs is 28, which works out to 5.14 per cent. In fact in these fifty years it has never gone beyond 8 per cent. Thus all political parties have to try to see that enough Muslims

are nominated to contest elections, so that Muslim MLAs and MPs are selected in proportion to their population. It will give the Muslims not only a sense of confidence but also a sense of participation in the political processes in India.

Muslims feel insecure because of the recurrence of communal riots. Many Muslims who come up the hard way lose everything whenever these occur. And it is well known that the causes of communalism are more political than religious in nature. If Muslims have a greater sense of participation in the political process it will help reduce the recurrence of communal violence. This will in turn strengthen the roots of liberal and pluralist democracy in India. The orientation of Muslim politics has undergone a fundamental change in the post Babri situation. It has been disentangled from emotional issues and veers around concrete issues of their survival, their economic and educational problems. This is a very healthy development and augurs well for Indian secularism. If this process is further strengthened it will help reduce communal tensions and strengthen the forces of national integration. Both governmental and non governmental agencies can play an important role in deepening these processes.

It should be stressed in the concluding part of this article that the strength of Indian democracy lies in its plurality. Historically we have been a pluralist society and the more we recognise the role of pluralism in our country the better it will be for its future. All sections and communities have contributed immensely to the progress of our country. One must not only duly recognise this fact but also make efforts to provide opportunities to all castes and communities to further enable them to enrich our society culturally, educationally and economically. No single community can claim to perform this task by itself. The recognition of our plurality will ease social tensions on the one hand, and immensely enrich the quality of our liberal democracy on the other.

VINA MAZUMDAR

Women: From Equality to Empowerment

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

At the fag end of the twentieth century, with the principle of 'uncertainty' dominating both scientific and other discourses, concepts and terms defining human and social relations have been particularly affected by rapid changes in meaning, usage and interpretations. The globalization of discourses in the field of gender relations, which took 'a great leap forward' in the first half of the century, has been one of the major victims of this politics of language — whose *basic objective is not to clarify but to mystify the issues of ordinary human and social relationships*. I find the increasing use of the word 'gender' when we are discussing the roles, rights, responsibilities and aspirations of women — as individuals and social beings — a typical example of such mystification. Women have been continuously 'hidden' behind words like 'people', 'community', 'worker' and so on for the major part of recorded history. It is only through the ideologically convinced and dedicated efforts of scholars in women's studies that parts of this lost history are being recovered today.

By the end of World War II and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, educated women in my generation came to believe that their centuries' old struggle to achieve individual dignity and equality of status in societies had finally achieved success. Though these continued to be denied in formal constitutions in many countries, in the new born nation state of India *it was treated as a settled fact*.² The principle of gender equality — propagated by many social and political thinkers, especially Mahatma Gandhi, during the freedom struggle, and demanded by the young but determined women's movement which readily participated in the struggle, was acknowledged formally in the Fundamental Rights Resolution of the Indian National Congress in 1931.

The All-India Congress Committee (AICC), however, did not think it necessary to take any immediate follow-up action, possibly because, like other political organizations of later years, it believed that ideas of restructuring the age-old Indian social system — with its plethora of institutions and values designed to perpetuate inequalities and inequities of many kinds — could only be taken up after the first objective — freedom from colonial rule — had been achieved. Several provincial Congress Committees, however, created under pressure from women in their regions some mechanisms to

work with women in particular. In 1938 Subhas Chandra Bose, the new Congress president, appointed the first Women's Department at the AICC secretariat under the charge of Sucheta Kripalani.³

Bose also constituted the National Planning Committee under the chairmanship of Jawaharlal Nehru. This committee, in turn, appointed a Sub-Committee on Women which submitted its final report in 1941. Though some of the sub-committee's recommendations had been debated in the National Planning Committee and its full report⁴ was published in 1941, *the document mysteriously remained 'missing', even from histories of the freedom struggle, or of India's planning, until it was resurrected by some women's studies scholars during the last two decades.*⁶

Despite being a professional student and teacher of politics for a long time, it is only through my involvement in women's studies during the last quarter of a century that I have begun to realize the power of the politics of language, including the interpretation of the word 'power' itself. Pre-World War II academic discourses segregated government from politics — even in countries like the United States which took great pride in their democratic set-up. In the post-World War II period, however, the increasing influence of systems analysis as a tool in the social sciences promoted the term 'political systems' which combined the hitherto segregated aspects. In 1970 (after a break in my teaching profession for five years) I found myself having to explain to moffussil college undergraduates the meaning of the new term. I drew a circular diagram on the blackboard, and instead of using the mystifying jargon of contemporary political science textbooks I used my understanding of *power* learnt from my father⁵ and my brother and brother-in-law, both electrical engineers, as being more suitable for a democracy, and something my young students would understand clearly. My diagram therefore started from the point where power was generated, through the stage of its being harnessed and consolidated, to the last stage where it was used constructively or dissipated in an irresponsible or destructive manner. Having lived through World War II and the outcry against the atom bomb and other ghastly features of the War as a student, I found it much easier to get my raw students to understand the meaning of power and its place in a political system.

Following the same principle — of the need to demystify complex concepts frequently used with contradictory objectives — I want to raise some questions about the two terms used in the title of this paper. The Preamble to the Constitution of the Indian Republic posits five major principles as the foundation and aim of the Indian political system:

We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign Socialist Secular Democratic Republic and to secure to all its citizens:

Justice: Social, economic and political;

Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;
 Equality of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all
 Fraternity, assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and
integrity of the Nation.

In our Constituent Assembly this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949,
 do hereby adopt, enact and give to ourselves this Constitution

The words 'socialist, secular' were inserted between 'sovereign' and 'democratic' by an amendment to the Constitution in 1976, making the second line of the quotation read 'Sovereign Socialist Democratic Republic' and to secure to all its citizens'.¹ Anyway, the key words in this Preamble, in my view are 'to secure to all its citizens', which meant that it was to be irrespective of their caste, class, creed, or gender. Though justice, liberty, equality and fraternity have been listed as separate principles, the key to their interpretation is provided by the phrase 'assuring the dignity of the individual'. Thus without using the word human rights, the Preamble subsumes its meaning. During the debate after the publication of the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India,² Justice Krishna Iyer, *rethinking the separate terms from the perspective of women who, despite the Constitutional guarantees had not achieved real justice, or liberty, or equality, or dignity – came up with the holistic concept of gender justice which united all the principles into one, to challenge the persistent denial of these promised objectives to the overwhelming majority of the women of India within a quarter of a century after the birth of the Republic.*

The Committee on the Status of Women in India (CSWI) had, to an extent, tried to suggest the same sense at the end of the approach chapter of its report through the following guidelines of the criteria:

We believe:

1. that equality of women is necessary, not merely on the grounds of social justice, but as a basic condition for social, economic and **political development of the nation;**
2. that in order to release women from their dependent and unequal status, improvement of their employment opportunities and earning power has to be given the highest priority;
3. that society owes a special responsibility to women because of their child-bearing function. Safe bearing and rearing of children is an obligation that has to be shared by the mother, the father and society;
4. that the contribution made by an active housewife to the running and management of a family should be admitted as economically and socially productive and contributing to national savings and **development;**
5. that marriage and motherhood should not become a disability in women's fulfilling their full and proper role in the task of national development. Therefore, it is important that society, including women themselves, must accept their responsibility in this field;

1. *...also eradicated the inequalities imposed on women. It was the first time in a society where inequalities of the population in wealth and knowledge had existed. It sought to bring equality of all inequalities. It was possible to bring about equality by means of the political movement and the administrative and legislative system. But no other aspect of a backward society like concept of competition and aggression, and individualism, gender hierarchy and privilege were by such means not so far from the dominant social population and can be manipulated by a small minority.*
2. *that "Constitution is not more in the domain of the politics but in the Constitution, the concept of inequality necessary will be necessary to transform de jure into de facto equality."*

These guidelines were clear on the lack of the concept of equality, justice or rights were absolute rights, and that justice that was achieved for all, starting from the poorest, much to the wonder of Indians, the founding fathers had a low standard of living. But Rajiv Gandhi never be transformed into reality. *Equality for all did not mean "equality among equals"* but equality across the various and hierarchical divisions of our plural society. Since women cannot be separated from their communities, caste, religious group, class, occupation, etc., then they have to be perceived as a category among all these sections. It is obvious that their status as women in their own section or among other women in our plural and hierarchical society, could not be analysed or defined without reference to the position of that particular group within the Indian socio-economic and political system. *If we try to bring in gender equality without its political setting, would it fail?*

Secondly, Indian history yields ample evidence that the rights and freedoms enjoyed by women change in direct proportion to the status of their families and especially men in their families within the social hierarchy.¹⁰ The latest evidence of this has come from the pathbreaking work of a young IAS officer, proving with quantitative data drawn from the last two censuses — *that the only section of India's multiple people who neither destroy their baby daughters before or immediately after birth nor allow them to die in infancy through discrimination in nutrition and health care are the Adivasis whom the rest of us have been taught to regard as the most backward, least developed, civilized members of our nation.*¹¹

These sketchy references to our long and proud history provide the backdrop for my re-examination of the concept of the empowerment of women in today's global as well as national policy discourses. In a national seminar on the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, I had to challenge one of the participants who stated that power rests with government and, therefore, only the government can empower the people by conferring new rights. I picked a copy of the Constitution and said that it made it very clear that

power was generated from and by the people, and followed the circuitous path that I had illustrated to my undergraduate students a quarter of a century earlier by means of my diagram.

To the women's movement, with whom it has been my privilege to be actively associated during the last twenty years, I have repeatedly posed the question: *Who is empowering whom? When we — women who have enjoyed the benefits and privileges of the equality clauses of the Constitution — face the reality of our powerlessness in affecting or directing the macro process of change — political, cultural, social and economic — transforming our society and our polity, and desperately try to seek a base for ourselves amongst the most impoverished, marginalized and deprived sections of women in our country, what is the outcome? Do we succeed in empowering them with the knowledge, information, other resources and support that we try to mobilize on their behalf, or do they, by their demonstration of grit, courage, and determination in facing problems that would have paralysed most of us, help us to empower ourselves?* In my multiple roles as a participant, observer, and analyst, as well as an activist, *I have found the relationship is mutually reinforcing, as poor, unlettered peasant women or their counterparts in the urban informal sector empower themselves through collective action.*¹²

The current use of this word at the global (especially within donor agencies) and the official national level causes many of us great distress. As far as the global discourse is concerned, I will quote the reaction from my friend Malati Mandi (a Santhal peasant woman, virtually illiterate — who over the last seventeen years has been active with others like her in building a network of village-level organizations of poor peasant women) at a seminar convened by the Asian Development Bank on 'Gender Issues in Agriculture' (Manila, 1990):

What do you mean by mainstreaming? To make some room for us in all that is going on? But that is not what we want. We want no part in planting thousands of eucalyptus trees that rob our soil of water and other plants, leaving our children and cattle hungry. We want to *change* these processes. If we have our way, we will call the scientists to work with us, adding their knowledge to ours, and look for solutions that would be good for everybody.¹³

Members of Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), after joining in several discussions on the dualism of the Indian economy, challenged their own *classification as workers in the informal sector*.

We are the majority, are we not? Why then should we be defined in terms of a minority which does not share our characteristics or problems?¹⁴

As for the word 'power' — I cite below a new definition collectively worked out by an international group of women activists and scholars (among whom Asians, especially Indians constituted the majority):

1. There are two long-term feminist goals that underlie women's struggle for liberation from oppression and discrimination in all

spheres and at all levels of society: First, the freedom from oppression for women involves not only equity, but also the right of women to freedom of choice, and the power to control their own lives within and outside the home. Having control over our lives and our bodies is essential to ensure a sense of dignity and autonomy for every woman.

2. When we speak of the power to control our lives, the term 'power' is used not as a mode of domination over others but as:
 - (a) a sense of internal strength and confidence to face life;
 - (b) the right to determine our choices in life;
 - (c) the ability to influence the social processes that affect our lives; and
 - (d) an influence on the direction of social change.
3. The oppression of women is rooted in both inequities and discrimination based on sex and in poverty and the injustices of the political and economic systems based on race and class. This oppression manifests itself through oppressive social structures, and obsolete, irrational attitudes that thrive on inequalities of all types. Values surrounding women's roles in society are historically embedded in these structures and influence both men and women. Measures for modifying some of these values have failed when they did not attempt to change the structures. The partial changes thus effected could benefit only a minority of women. Even these women were later powerless to resist the reassertion of the old, unequal and exploitative values, backed as they are by the powerful forces of an international economic system, and feudal structures and values in India.
4. The second goal of feminism is therefore the removal of all forms of inequity and oppression through the creation of a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally. This means the involvement of women in national liberation struggles, in plans for national development, and in local and global strategies for change.
5. Some political ideologies and national and social movements have contained the seeds of many of the ideas of women's liberation through their advocacy of equality for women and their recognition of the need to involve women in people's movements. Feminism gives those ideas further dimensions. Women's struggle is not only crucial but central to the transformation of exploitative social structures and the creation of a more just society.
6. Feminism is transforming these struggles and releasing women's creativity in many ways. This leads to new insights about social structures and social relations — visions of a new world and of new concepts of personhood for women, men and children in that world.¹⁵

In the next two sections of this paper, I review very sketchily the changing perspective on gender justice, equality and empowerment of (a) the Indian State in the eight Five Year Plans since the adoption of the Constitution; and (b) within the Indian women's movement.

GENDER JUSTICE AND THE INDIAN STATE (1950-97) ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK

In the first Five Year Plan (1951-6) the women's question was perceived as primarily a social one by a major section of the political leadership and the bureaucracy. The role of the State in 'social' issues was viewed with great hesitation and caution. *Significantly, issues identified by the National Planning Committee's Sub-Committee on Women were not considered by the official planners a decade later.* Instead women were perceived as beings in need of education, health and welfare services only.¹⁶

However, in the absence of any governmental machinery for welfare related activities, the Central Social Welfare Board (CSWB) undertook to promote a number of welfare measures through voluntary organizations, *encouraging women's organizations to take up such activities in partnership with the government. The promotion of organizations of women at various levels but especially at the grassroots was at the heart of this strategy.* Mahila Mandals were promoted as 'delivery mechanisms' for essential services like education, health, especially for maternal and child health and so on, both by the CSWB and the Community Development Programme (CDP) through the first and the second Five Year Plans.

This combination of institution building and human resource development was also expected, at least by Durgabai, the Gandhian Member of the Planning Committee¹⁷ and a few bureaucrats¹⁸ to prepare women to participate in political and developmental processes. Thus, though the language of these strategies reflected the contemporary meaning of 'welfare', *there was a conceptual thrust (even though inadequately articulated) toward actively involving and stimulating the participation of women's organizations in the processes of change.* However, increasing bureaucratic control, top-down designing and streamlining of programmes and declining resource support to organizational and institutional development from below both reflected and contributed to the low priority and non-serious approach to basic issues in the promotion of gender equality.

The third, fourth and fifth Plans, including the four years of Plan holiday before the fifth Plan, continued the same approach with declining support to the strategies of organization building and human resource development. Some priority was accorded to women's education after the Report of the National Committee on Women's Education (1958-9). Planners, however, failed to address the major problems of poverty, illiteracy, non-enrolment, drop-out and so on that affected the large majority of girls and women. *From*

the third Plan onwards, the issue of population control acquired increasing priority. Family Planning services were introduced within the health services, but very quickly and increasingly dominated the health services, with separate allocations and staff. Repeated directives from the Planning Commission from the fourth Plan onwards to integrate Family Planning with Maternity and Child Health (MCH) services were not implemented. Programmes for supplementary nutrition to children and nursing and expectant mothers from poverty groups were introduced by the Welfare Department but received far less priority and resources and no integration with MCH.

THE CSWT'S CRITIQUE, PARLIAMENTARY MANDATE AND THE EMERGENCY (1974-7)

This neglect by the State came in for severe criticism in the report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India.¹⁹

The pre-independence planning document had addressed women's economic, civil and social rights. Economic rights and needs were not really built into the first five plans. Labour laws, valid only for the organized secondary sector, had incorporated most of the ILO conventions before planning started. Maternity benefits were enacted in 1961, but not equal remunerations. Interestingly, however, both these principles were incorporated into public service rules (with a few exceptions), apparently in compliance with Articles 16 and 15 of the Constitution, but no one thought of child-care support for women in these services. Service rules were the responsibility of the home ministry, labour laws of the labour ministry. Some sectors of government (for example, railways, defence services, insurance, mining) continued discriminatory and exclusionary practices against women because there was no comprehensive policy or laws applicable to all categories of women workers and very little awareness of the implications of the constitutional mandate for economic and social organization and laws. On the other hand, *the growing emphasis on population control highlighted women's reproductive rather than their productive roles, influencing a 'populationist' approach to women's development needs.*

The Committee was of the view that the Indian State had failed in its constitutional responsibility of not discriminating on the grounds of gender. Plans for the development of agriculture, industry, fisheries, livestock and other major sectors of the Indian economy contained no acknowledgment of the involvement of the millions of women in these sectors for a livelihood. *In fact women had been increasingly viewed by the planners as not being in need of an independent livelihood, to the point where women's decreasing work participation rate and share of employment, increasing poverty and insecurity in sectors of the economy in which they used to dominate earlier (agriculture, forestry, livestock, cottage industry, sericulture, fisheries, retail) were not even viewed as unfortunate problems of change.*²⁰ This process of marginalization of the large majority of

women in the economy and their consequent neglect and devaluation by the society and the state were demonstrations of gender, class and urban bias.

Treating the declining sex ratio as a composite indicator of the worsening situation of the majority of women, the Committee demonstrated that this process, begun much earlier, had been accelerated during the period of planned development. The increasing investment in education, health and the opening of opportunities for public employment had benefited a small minority, widening the gap between this minority and the majority of women. Even amongst the privileged minority, the promise of gender equality was threatened by the escalation of social practices like dowry, continued inequality in personal laws (including Hindu Law which had been 'reformed' after independence), nonenforcement of existing laws, which sought to offer some protection to women (e.g. labour laws or criminal law), and the 'invisibility' of women's needs, concerns and perspectives in the planning process.

The parliamentary debate on the CSWT's report concluded in a very wide mandate to the government 'to remove all disabilities that Indian women continue to suffer from'. However, the declaration of National Emergency within a few weeks relegated any serious action on most of the Committee's recommendations to a distant future.

CONCEPTUAL ADVANCE AND THE POLITICS OF PLANNING WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT (1977-80)

It was only with the change of government in 1977 that some serious exercises in policy review were taken up between 1977 and 1980. Amongst these, the four most significant exercises were the Report of the Working Group on Employment of Women, 1977-8; Report of the Working Group on Development of Village Level Organizations of Rural Women, 1977-8; Report of the Working Group on Adult Education Programmes for Women, 1977-8; and Report of the National Committee on the Role and Participation of Women in Agriculture and Rural Development, 1979-80.²²

These exercises definitely marked a watershed in conceptualizing basic problems and strategies for women's development in India. Instead of the United Nations Agenda for the Women's Decade influencing Indian planning, it was the Indian Agenda that got incorporated into the United Nations mid-Decade Programme of Action — through the mediacy of the Non-aligned Movement's Special Conference on Women and Development (Baghdad, 1979); and India's Membership of (i) the Commission on the Status of Women (1978-80) and (ii) the Preparatory Committee for the Mid-Decade Copenhagen Conference and Programme of Action (1980). The Secretary-General of the Mid-Decade UN Conference acknowledged India's contribution to the emphasis on third world perspectives on development and the adoption of employment, health and education as a sub-theme of the decade's agenda.

The conceptual approach evolved through these few years identified

women's developmental needs as incorporating multiple dimensions — cutting across economic, social and political sectors — requiring *explicit examination of women's situation in various sector: agriculture and allied fields, industry, labour and employment, power, environment, energy, science and technology as well as the social and infrastructural sectors*. Such explicit examination called for three operational strategies:

- a) of establishing cells within various sectoral development planning agencies at different levels;
- b) earmarking a share of various sectoral allocations for investment in women rather than relegating women to only women specific programmes and women specific agencies; and
- c) promoting rural employment and development through women's own collective organizations, at the grassroots. Spontaneous indigenous models had already emerged in SIWA, Working Women's Forum (WWF), Annapoorna Mahila Mandal and so on. The economic, social and political dynamism they displayed offered hopes of empowerment for others, elsewhere.

The sixth Five Year Plan prepared by the Janata Government (1979–80) released in December 1979 contained a definite admission of failure to remove disparity and injustice in both social and economic life. It also stated that the objective of population control could not be achieved without bringing about major changes in the status of women. Including women within the chapters on employment and manpower and rural development, this document made a definite departure from earlier plans where women had been mentioned only in the chapters on the social services. In suggesting the need for 'administrative innovation' and 'collection of sex-wise distribution data on development assistance', the plan acknowledged the previous neglect, the need for better information flow and new mechanisms to ensure women receiving their 'due share' of government's attention and support, and 'equal opportunity for growth and distributive justice'. *Support for organizations of rural women was suggested on the same principles as organizations of the rural poor — to improve their 'bargaining power and access to development assistance'.*

This conceptual advance however was not matched by prescriptive measures. With a change of government in 1980, this document became inoperative. A new Planning Commission was appointed. It however remains significant as a stepping stone to later stages of women's development — from 1980 to 1995.

THE SIXTH FIVE YEAR PLAN (1980–5): PRESSURE FROM THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The framework for the sixth Plan, released by the new Planning Commission in August 1980 reverted women to the social services and did not reflect any

of the homework undertaken by various official expert groups between 1975 and 1980. Nor did it reflect approaches and perspectives advocated by Indian delegations to international conferences of the UN or the Non-Aligned Movement.

It was from this point that intervention by national women's organizations began to make some impact on the planning process. It began a period of partnership and alliance between the few cells on women created within the ministries of labour and employment, social welfare and rural development, and the growing women's movement and women's studies scholars. A memorandum submitted jointly by seven women's organizations¹¹ in 1980 with support from women members of Parliament persuaded the Planning Commission to incorporate, for the first time in India's planning history, a **chapter on women and development**.

Chapter 27 acknowledged the continued low status of women as a result of inadequate opportunities of 'independent employment and income', referred to demographic trends (higher mortality, lower economic participation, literacy, sex-ratio and so on as issues of serious concern and went on to define a multipronged but interdependent strategy for women's development which by its very nature would be dependent on the total development process'. Emphasis on the 'family centred' poverty alleviation strategy (which invited attacks from the Wider Institute of Development scholars through the 1980s) was qualified by the statement that 'economic independence would accelerate improvement of women's status'.

A marked improvement in the redistributive policies of government was signified by the promise that 'in cases of transferred assets such as agricultural and homestead land, government shall endeavour to provide joint title to husband and wife'. The strengthening of voluntary organizations of women at the grassroots was advocated 'for creating a proper climate for the introduction of social legislation as well as for its effective implementation and the provision of legal aid'. Such grassroots organizations were also necessary *'as channels for women to participate effectively in decisions that affect their lives and for promoting adequate development efforts for women at different levels'*. There were definite suggestions for active promotion of such collectives by the government and linking them with institutions which could provide support in various forms.

For education the emphasis was on special support services to expand women's access to all types of education. The need for child-care services as a support for the education of girls as well as for working mothers of different classes was acknowledged, and public services requested to provide them for their women colleagues. However, the Labour Ministry's innovative plan for a National Programme for Child Care and Maternity Benefit in partnership between the government and all other employers (which had received the verbal support of national trade unions and women's organizations in 1979) was not taken up.

The institution of a women's quota and the magic formula of one-third made its appearance within the Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSE) programme. There was a general statement that it would be better to expand co-educational institutions rather than promote separate women's polytechnics. Similarly, instead of relegating women's employment to some women-prone sectors, the sixth Plan proposed 'corrective measures' in sectors where 'women's employment is low or on the decline'.

THE SEVENTH FIVE YEAR PLAN (1985-90). PLAN PROPOSES, GOVERNMENT DISPOSES

With the twin emphases on employment and productivity in the seventh Plan, the approach paper highlighted the strategy of a direct attack on the problems of poverty, unemployment and regional imbalances with 'accelerated development of human resources'. There was greater emphasis on the provision of gainful employment to the unemployed — particularly women and youth. *The strategy of organizing women around socio-economic activities was reiterated, for the twin objectives of making their projects economically viable and adding to their social strength for overall enhancement of their status.*

The actual Plan document (Chapter 14) demonstrated some advance in the use of feminist language (the role of 'the predominantly patriarchal order in confining women in an oppressive environment'); a substantive acknowledgment of women's important role in agriculture and allied sectors and the existence of a gap between the actual social reality and its perception by society at large. *However, in identifying concrete strategies there was a tendency to slide back into women-specific sectors and a refusal to extend the quota or the special component Plan approach.*

The Plan exercises and the document had been completed in 1984. The handful of officials engaged in these exercises had been told, in no uncertain terms, that government was not 'prepared to consider 'any changes in policy', so they had contented themselves with a 'tinkering' approach. The tragic assassination of the prime minister brought changes in the government. A young prime minister, riding the crest of a massive people's mandate — which was openly reported to have been gained greatly from the women's vote — announced his intention of making major policy changes regarding women, education and the efficiency of administration (president's address to Parliament, January 1985). The atmosphere created by the president's address was optimistic for the supporters of the women's cause within the government.

Outside the government also, women's organizations and WID scholars were reviewing the changes since 1980 and pooling their ideas and demands to place these before the government. Preparations were on for the end of the decade UN Conference at Nairobi, and an international group of feminist scholars from the Third World, (Development Alternatives with Women for

a New Year, or DAWN as the acronym goes — initiated by some Indian women) was hard at work to produce an alternative approach to development strategies, at national and international levels. The Government of India was playing host to the Second Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Conference on Women and Development to offer inputs to the Nairobi meet. In 1984, at an International Labour Organization sponsored Afro-Asian Conference on Rural Women's Organizations and Development, India's approaches and experiments — official and non-official — had received encouraging appreciation from both Asian and African participants. The report, titled *Women, Resources and Power* contained many of the lessons of earlier attempts at generating employment, reducing poverty and education, increasing productivity and women's empowerment through the strategy of enhanced investment in collective organizations of poor rural women, building on their existing expertise and skills at the initial stage.

These background events encouraged the departments of rural development and women and child development, and the ministry of labour and employment to adopt some bold measures. They represented greater clarity and commitment on the part of those ministries/departments which had undertaken some serious rethinking, information gathering and investment efforts and their expectation of a distinct change in political priorities.

Despite the Plan document's refusal to adopt the 'special component' or the quota approach — the department of rural development announced a 30 per cent quota for women in all anti-poverty programmes for the rural areas, in addition to the women-specific experimental programme (Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas) introduced midway through the sixth plan. Concurrent evaluation of all these programmes by independent research institutions involved periodic monitoring and regular reporting to Parliament of the progress of achievement in the women's quota. Steps were initiated to begin gender sensitization as a mandatory part of the training of rural development officials. A special task force appointed by the department of rural development recommended that such mandatory inclusion of gender sensitization was necessary for training of public servants of all categories. This recommendation — supported by the departments of rural development and women and child development — appeared to have evoked a positive response from the department of personnel and training.

Another thrust, emerging from some experimental training programmes sponsored by the departments of rural development and women and child development, comprised an attempt to make the organization of beneficiaries a central and common element in all programmes targeting poor women. Innovative, flexible programmes were introduced with this aim by the department of women and child development and the ministry of labour.²⁴

A final attempt by the department of rural development, to introduce the 'special component' approach by earmarking 30 per cent of the allocations

for anti-poverty programmes — to match the 30 per cent quota of beneficiaries — however, ran into resistance from the Cabinet. This decision had to wait till the eighth Five Year Plan. In the absence of such instructions, many state governments sought to meet the 30 per cent target by *reducing* the quantum of assistance to be offered to women individually or as a group — thus making many projects non-viable. Committed serious officials in some states²⁵ however interpreted the 30 per cent quota as inclusive of a similar share of the allocations, thus achieving a quantum jump in the available resources.

The new government had also converted the division for women's welfare and development, till then a part of the ministry of social welfare, into a full department of women and child development — transferring it simultaneously to the newly created ministry of human resource development — which included the departments of education, culture, sports and youth affairs. Since preparations for a new educational policy were on the anvil there were high expectations of close collaboration between the two departments, on the same lines that had evolved with rural development.

The collaboration worked during the preparatory work on the policy. Women's organizations and women's studies groups mounted systematic pressure from outside. They enrolled persons interested in educational reform — even the University Grants Commission — to lobby for a *new role* for educational institutions — as conscious promoters of the value of gender equality. To play this role effectively, teachers, students and educational administrators needed greater exposure and involvement in women's struggles to change their marginalized, subordinate and oppressed status — which could eventually change their perceptions and views about women's actual roles, contributions, burdens and oppressions. This mental transformation could make conventional instruments like curriculum-change, research and training, powerful ideological tools to alter the mindsets of future generations.

These ideas had been evolving since the ferment of reactions to the CSWI's Report through various experiments and conferences organized by women's studies scholars. Two successive national conferences, and several smaller meetings had contributed to refining theories, tools and strategies, to achieve a major step in educational development by correcting its earlier neglect and distortion of women's life experiences, concerns and rights to ensure justice, dignity and fair treatment from society — especially from the privileged intelligentsia dominating all power structures — the products of the education system. As the secretary, social welfare, searching for new policy breakthroughs in the wake of the president's address in January 1985 commented in an informal discussion — 'This is a very long-term and very complex strategy. It's not going to be easy, but I'll buy it'.²⁶

A year's effort, through pressures from the women's movement and internal struggle within the government, resulted in the incorporation of two

paragraphs on Education for Women's Equality within the National Policy on Education. For the first time it carried the message that along with expanding women's access to all kinds of education, the system with all its institutions had to shoulder a major responsibility for genuine empowerment of women by changing the social construction of gender. Conceptually it was a breakthrough, but the changed political and resources situation by 1986 left it — like many other policies — a pious statement of intentions. The will was lacking.

Another breakthrough was on the issue of effective representation of women in Panchayati Raj institutions. The CSWT's recommendations in this regard had been shelved. Efforts to resurrect them to start a debate were initiated by the same secretary, social welfare, from January 1985. Its first results became visible two years later.

Government of India's decision to prepare a National Perspective Plan (NPP) for women began a flurry of activities under the aegis of the department of women and child development. A parallel move was the appointment of the National Commission for Self-Employed Women (NCSEW) — to help articulate the problems, needs and aspirations of working women in the poverty sector — many of them still missing in national statistics of workers and economic activity.

The NPP (1988) wanted an increase in women's participation and presence at decision-making levels — in local self-government bodies, state assemblies and Parliament. Suggesting a 30 per cent reservation at all these levels, NPP proposed that the seats be filled by nomination in the early years.

The Movement's critique of NPP²⁷ made members of the political establishment hesitate. The document was therefore not placed before Parliament. Nor did it contribute seriously to policy formulation. *What was picked up by the Government of India and some opposition parties was the recommendation of women's organizations for a substantial expansion of women's participation in local government bodies — but through election and reservation of seats. It still took three bills and two changes in government (1989 and 1991) before the 73rd and 74th (Constitutional) Amendments 1992 conferred constitutional status on these bodies, mandated regular elections and wider powers/resources, and reserved one-third of the seats for women, including among the already reserved categories of SCs/STs, and office-bearers at different levels of the local bodies.* States which have held elections since 1993 experienced no difficulty in obtaining women's response, as voters and as candidates. In the general elections of 1996 most political parties conceded women's demand for reservation at state and national levels also. The coalition government which assumed office after 1996 with H.D. Deve Gowda as prime minister placed this in its Common Minimum Programme. The national debate — inside and outside Parliament on the 81st (Constitutional) Amendment Bill is discussed in the last section of this paper.

EIGHTH FIVE YEAR PLAN (1992-7):

CRISIS OF THE NATION STATE AND THE POLITICS OF GLOBALIZATION

The shift in economic policy made the Approach Paper and Policy Framework very different from earlier documents. Though human development was stated as the objective, the discussions reflected the difference with previous plans. *In Part I therefore women are mentioned only in the context of the need for population control. In Part II the sectoral chapters do not mention women except in the context of women-specific programmes. The principles of a women's quota, or an earmarked share of allocations are not mentioned — even in the Rural Development or Poverty Alleviation chapter. This is significant because Rural Development used both (40 per cent of the beneficiaries and resources).*

Women's development was otherwise reverted to the chapter on social welfare, though the emphases remained on employment and education. The new features of the section on women's development were a paragraph on violence against women and a two-page 'situational analysis' which highlighted the problems of higher mortality, lower education and the increasing unemployment of women. It also underscored 'the conceptual, methodological and perception' biases regarding the value of women's work, compounded by women's concentration in the informal sector, resulting in casualization, non-protection of labour laws and inaccessibility to credit, technology and other types of development assistance.

'The strategy in the Eighth Plan will be to ensure that the benefits of development from different sectors do not bypass women and special programmes are implemented to complement the general programmes'. The strategy of formation and strengthening of grassroots organizations to 'articulate local women's needs and play an important role in decentralized planning and implementation' was reiterated. Convergence and integration of services offered by health, educational, employment and welfare programmes at the grassroots level were promised.

The girl child merited a paragraph for the first time, with the promise of 'special programmes'.

Education and nutrition were still advocated on instrumentalist logic,²⁸ but legal literacy and 'changes in societal attitudes and perceptions in regard to the role of women' were mentioned as essential for 'empowerment'. Being placed at the fag end of the document, the absence of links drawn between these strategies with all that had gone before tends to stand out.²⁹

FUTURE PROSPECTS?

One of the positive outcomes of the Movement's critique of the NPP was the decision by the National Front government in 1990 to enact a law for setting up a National Commission for Women with the power to review the

laws and the government's policies. This was also empowered to recommend necessary changes or additions with a view to safeguarding and promoting women's rights to equality and justice guaranteed by the Constitution and other laws of the country. While the National Commission for Women Act was passed in August 1990, after a nationwide debate and with the support of all major political parties, it took the Government of India two years and constant and repeated pressure from women's organizations before the commission was finally constituted. Though women's organizations had worked very hard to make the commission truly effective as a vigilance body, delegated legislation, in the shape of rules of procedure, recruitment and so on, left the commission largely at the mercy of the bureaucracy. The recommendations made by its various task forces on legal reform have been gathering dust in various departments. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) set up a few years later has been given a constitutional status, but the NCW remains, in effect, a subordinate agency of the department of women and child development, similar to the Central Social Welfare Board, which had preceded the creation of the department of social welfare within the government.⁴⁰

Many of NCW's investigative reports confirm the growing tendency on the part of various states and other government agencies to relegate women's rights and development to the margin. There is little evidence of follow-up action on the part of the State. It is the same with the commission's repeated efforts to intervene in improving effective delivery of justice in cases involving violence against women and their rights. In recent years the commission has introduced some experiments to speed up the delivery of justice by holding public hearings and organizing Mahila Adalats with the permission of the judiciary. These attempts are still in a state of experimentation and small in their outreach, making it difficult to assess their impact — either on the legal system or on public opinion.

Two recent interventions by the commission have exposed the widening gap between the commission's thinking and that of the ruling establishment. One of these is the NCW's wholehearted espousal of the 81st (Constitutional) Amendment Bill, 1997, which seeks to follow up the 73rd and 74th Amendments of 1992 by providing similar reservations of one-third seats for women in state assemblies and Parliament. This has already run into very heavy opposition both inside and outside Parliament, and its fate remains uncertain.

The other major difference is on the government's draft statement on National Population Policy, which was reported as ready for introduction in Parliament before the government remembered that the NCW's comments had not been obtained.⁴¹ The policy has been on the anvil since the recommendations of a sub-committee of the National Development Council (NDC) in 1991 and involves some major constitutional and legislative amendments. The 79th Constitutional Amendment Bill was drawn up in 1992 proposing a two-child norm for all elected representatives (i.e. from Panchayats to Parliament) to be enforced prospectively after the bill is

enacted. It is reported that the bill was referred to the Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare but apparently not the NCW or Parliament, one year before the government appointed an Expert Group (chaired by Dr M.S. Swaminathan) to prepare a draft National Population Policy.

The Swaminathan Committee's report, in its first part, *recommended a social development and holistic approach to the problem of population growth, stating emphatically that it had to be a 'pro-poor, pro-women and pro-nature' policy.* The second part — focussing on implementation strategy, however, seemed to echo, though in less strong language, some of the ideas of the NDC Committee, regarding the two-child norm for all elected representatives. Despite the increasing use of words like 'transparency' and 'accountability' in government it has not been possible for me to find out whether the Swaminathan Committee had been warned that the 79th Constitutional Amendment had already been drafted and placed before the Parliamentary Standing Committee. Another implementation strategy recommended by the Swaminathan Committee's was to deprive *victims of child marriage their right to public or organized employment, as a measure 'to control child marriages' banned by law since 1929.*³²

The women's movement, which had viewed the appointment of the expert group with some hope, and had offered its detailed and constructive suggestions to the group on the request of its chairman, reacted in great anger to these implementation strategies. *Though the Expert Group's Report was tabled in Parliament in 1994, the present draft statement contains very little of the first part.* Only some of the rhetoric is retained. The group's strong plea for gender equity and pro-door policy have been turned into a *panchsheel* for gender relations. The five principles proposed are:

equality of status; respect for the views and independence of the other, even in situations of interdependence; gentle courtesy in personal and social relations; extending maximum assistance to the other to achieve full potential; and abjuring possessiveness.

There are many other promises about improved health care, including reproductive health care, and safer and effective contraceptive methods with 'informed choice, quality services, and careful follow-up'; community participation, and 'promotion of social and biomedical research and technology 'relevant to population stabilization'; apart from *empowerment mechanisms* at the level of the family, local bodies, districts, states and national levels. *But there is no mention of the existing laws enacted by several states as well as by the national government to prevent the misuse of amniocentesis and other sex selection/sex determination tests which have resulted in the escalation of female foeticide and female infanticide in many parts of the country.* Recent studies prove that the declining proportion of girl infants in the 0-4 and 5-9 age groups is a spreading phenomenon between the censuses of 1981 and 1991.³³

An earlier attempt by the government to amend the Maternity Benefits

Act, 1961, restricting benefits to only two children, had to be withdrawn under protests from women's organizations and a somewhat belated intervention by the NCW. Recognizing that the new Population Policy Draft was likely to face similar protests by the women's movement, the NCW constituted an expert committee and on the basis of its advice, *sent its criticisms to the government in early 1997*. As far as I am aware, the draft has not been introduced in Parliament so far, but some women MPs report that on this issue there is little difference among members from different parties — who appear to be suffering from a fear psychosis sedulously promoted by numbers which suppress all other research findings by demographers. These findings include the fact that India has already entered the phase of demographic transition, brought about by the natural and developmental processes, rather than the direct interventions for population control, and warnings from eminent social scientists that authoritarianism or coercion does not succeed in this field. Rather, that 'it achieves little and destroys a lot'.³⁴

I conclude this section with a reminder that various other proposed policy measures for the empowerment of women and girls in particular through health, education and employment are being drafted *in the context of the new economic policies under which allocations for the social services sectors have been visibly curtailed during the last seven years, and at a time when even the anti-poverty programmes are facing cuts through the reported plea of under-utilization by the states, themselves the victims of the same resource crunch*.

FROM THE WINNING OF SWARAJ TO 'AFFECTING THE POLITICAL DELIBERATIONS OF THE NATION'³⁵

It is a popular belief that women who participated in the freedom struggle came mainly from the elite urban middle classes. Most national and academic efforts at writing the history of the struggle refer *en passant* to women's participation. A few names mentioned are those of outstanding national-level leaders. The names of ordinary women from rural areas and small mofussil towns were barely mentioned, even by historians of popular struggles by the peasantry, by workers, by tribal groups and others. The same applies to intermittent struggles by peasants, workers and other oppressed groups in the decades after independence. As mentioned earlier, some of these curtains of invisibility are being lifted slowly but gradually by women's studies scholars.

Another popular belief, endorsed to a considerable extent by the CSWI and the resurgent women's movement from the late 1970s, was that the women's movement had died down soon after the achievement of independence, and that women's organizations had allowed the social debate on the women's question to fade out of the public arena and the State's action agenda. As new evidence about these past decades kept surfacing, many of us who had subscribed to this belief have had to do a lot of rethinking, questioning the politics behind words like 'women's issues'.

'women's perspectives', 'women's roles' and 'women's participation'. Since I cannot condense an account of the women's movement over a century in this brief conclusion, I shall confine myself to using some symbolic figures and events to illustrate the movement's changing perspectives.

My first figure is Durgabai, a rebel *par excellence*, whose life and work as a freedom fighter and (as a member of the planning establishment) in the post-Independence period has remained virtually unacknowledged and uninterpreted by today's activists. Her early life epitomized the struggle of many upper-class spirited women, to whom the freedom movement provided an opportunity to break out of oppressive social norms, seeking and creating avenues for self-fulfilment and leadership. A rebel constricted by her inherited values which did not permit placing her own dreams and aspirations before her obligations to the family, she took on the needs of the bigger family, the nation, keeping her obligations clear and consistent to all those oppressed by poverty, ignorance and oppressive social institutions. Moving away from a child marriage imposed on her by her family, she became a leader and an institution builder at the age of twelve, challenging the Congress leadership in her own region and carrying Mahatma Gandhi off to a meeting of hundreds of *devadasis* who wanted to contribute all their jewellery to strengthen the freedom struggle. She opposed her own party leaders for agreeing to the classification of political prisoners into A, B and C classes when breaking the Salt Law. Two decades later she challenged Jawaharlal Nehru and two successive finance ministers (including C.D. Deshmukh, whom she was to marry later) for 'drawing rich men's budgets with no provision for the poor'.¹⁶ Insisting that the Chapter on Directive Principles in the Constitution placed a wide range of obligations on the State, she demanded budgetary provisions for what the bureaucrats termed 'welfare', but *she defined as social reform that which 'aims essentially at change, a change that may sometimes involve the basic values and social institutions in the community, fighting for the equality of rights of women, pleading for a better deal for Harijans, and launching a movement for a change in the manner of handling juvenile delinquents'*.¹⁷ The rebel was aware of the hurdles on the way.

I have interpreted her creation and development of the Central Social Welfare Board as an effort to awaken and mobilize women from her own class and caste background — rooted deeply in their obligations to the family, traditions, castes and religious norms — to free themselves from those values and participate in the task of nation building. Realizing that the excitement and slackening of controls during the freedom struggle could disappear after independence she dragooned her lieutenants into learning skills that they needed to build organizations and institutions and undertake programmes to assist women, children and the needy at the grassroots with government grants. The ideology that she preached persisted in successive generations of serving members of the Board, who continued to perceive the CSWB as a *non-official women's body assisting other voluntary organizations, mostly of*

women, to undertake a nation-building task that could be done better by them than the bureaucracy.³⁸

The CSWI's indictment of the State and its three branches, the women's organizations, and the educational system had driven many of us — through shame and anger — to a voyage of discovery of the diversity of women's situations, roles, traditions, values, constraints and strengths despite powerlessness. Our attempts to come closer to the realities of the lives of these different groups were painful yet rewarding. It helped me not only to re-interpret Durgabai's vision and the impact that she made on varied groups of women across the country (especially the tribal women in the North-east³⁹), but also to explore the continuities between her ideas and the post-Emergency movement.⁴⁰

The iniquity and injustice as well as the plurality and diversity in women's roles, values, and inner strengths became obvious with increasing interaction, forcing many of us to ask whether the plurality and diversity were necessarily points of weakness to be drowned out by what the ruling elites called 'national integration' — or could they be viewed as potential sources of strength? Since 1975, whenever I have been confronted by the plea of 'traditional cultural values', my instinctive retort has been: whose tradition? And how traditional is the tradition? Scientists today have discovered biodiversity as essential for sustaining the planet. But peasant women from different corners of the country and the subcontinent had been pointing this out for decades without getting a hearing! The demand for child care centres in every village and *mohalla* (rather than as a service provided by employers under direction from labour laws and ILO conventions) came from all poor women. Their logic was straight common sense. All children needed care and a chance to develop but factory and plantation workers did not want to entrust that care to those who exploited them.

Violence against women, especially within the family, had become a rallying point for the newly resurgent movement. Glancing back at the various magazines preserved by my mother through the 1920s and 1930s I now realize that this again was not a new phenomenon, and the nascent women's movement of that period was fully aware of the problem, though not in its present forms or scale. *But what they received from fellow freedom fighters and other enlightened public opinion was an ideological support against such violence, whereas today's movement has to deal with growing social insensitivity to violence against women and children in the family, in the workplace and in social and community relations, and the reluctance of the state and public opinion to enforce even the laws brought about to improve the protection of women by pressure from the movement.*

The pre-independence women's movement certainly had connections with the growing international women's movement of the period, not only through British suffragists but because of the ideology of anti-imperialism which some leaders of the international women's movement shared with their

Indian counterparts.⁴⁰ In the post World War II period, with the euphoria about 'decolonization', the international movement as well as its national counterparts became increasingly divided by the politics of the cold war. The women's liberation/feminist movements in the West since the 1960s infused new dimensions, inspirations and conceptual/theoretical approaches, influencing many younger highly educated women in India and elsewhere, giving rise to a great deal of criticism from many that the current movement was 'Western inspired'. Set within the continued legacy of ideological polarization that reflected national and international politics, it has appeared to many activists as well as analysts and external observers⁴² that these divisions within the Indian movement were irreconcilable. An exercise undertaken by the Centre for Women's Development Studies in 1994–5 of holding regional consultations with representatives of different streams of the movement, however, makes me and my colleagues feel otherwise.

Movement politics, as it has developed in India, tends to show up elements which are unclassifiable. Ideological differences exist — but within a continuum — and tend to get blurred when strategic choices have to be made between priorities. But the debates continue and the questions persist . . . Whereas ideological differences remain and perspectives differ, the overall thrust is in favour of unity in action.⁴³

The increasing tendency of the hitherto divided segments to come together has been repeatedly demonstrated in very recent years by (a) their identical reactions to 'the new economic reforms' and the glamorized propaganda about the new 'opportunities' offered by the current phase of globalization; (b) unanimity about the increasing threats to India's secular polity from cultural, religious, and ethnic fundamentalism of various hues; (c) agreement about the equally fundamentalist and blind approach to population policy; and (d) the virtually unanimous support from all levels of the movement for extending the principle of one-third reservation for women (introduced for local self government bodies by the Amendment of 1992) to state assemblies and Parliament,⁴⁴ to cite a few examples.

The common factor that unites the movement cutting across all ideological or personal divides *is that the movement represents a major thrust for the deepening of democracy*: hence the united opposition to the theories of 'end of ideology' and the 'retreat of the welfare state'. The opposition to the current phase of globalization is not only for its attack on cultures, but because of the threat it represents to the universal values of human equality, accountability of governance and power structures, with the concentration of vast economic, technological and political power in the hands of totally undemocratic and unaccountable agencies — which even threaten the nation state and the values of international equality. The opposition to fundamentalisms of many kind also springs from their demonstrated anti-women bias. *The forces of identity politics, in today's context, share one common prerequisite:*

their attempts to define and restrict political identity to accidents of birth require control over women's rights and freedoms, for which India's long history provides the best illustration. The reproductive capacity of women has also come to be viewed as a major threat by the populationist lobby — national as well as international.

As for the demand for reservations in all elective bodies, Section II of this paper explains the vital difference between the perspectives and priorities of the government appointed group, which authored the NPP, and the women's movement. The priority that the movement gave to this structural change at the grassroot level has been followed by its united opposition to all attempts to use the principle of a minimum 'critical mass' as a bargaining counter in the debates on the 81st (Constitutional) Amendment Bill — extending the principle to state assemblies and Parliament. The movement realizes that any dilution now will ultimately affect the Panchayati Raj provisions adversely. The movement would prefer that the 81st Amendment be voted down in Parliament — it will only strengthen the mobilization process as a consequence — rather than accept any compromise.

Women's empowerment like 'national integration' — a phrase which has done more to damage the Indian polity than any provisions for reservation — is historically linked (a) with 'the sanskritization process'

which 50 years of 'modernization' operating 'democratically' has not been able to weaken (and globalization has only enhanced and accelerated); and (b) development of new social institutions and values which can challenge social hierarchy, patriarchy and the politics of accidents of birth buttressing the theory of purity-pollution, which has always haunted our history.⁴⁵

As a student of politics and history I have always believed that the gamble taken by the founding fathers of our Constitution fifty years ago to introduce adult franchise when over 80 per cent of India's population was still non-literate, *is the one decision which has paid off the largest dividends*. It is time for India to try out some new experiments in achieving real democracy, and provide some new basis for the formation of political identities. The Indian women's movement could offer many suggestions and opportunities for both.

NOTES

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2. *Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on the Status of Women in India*, Government of India, 1975, p. 8.
3. AICC papers. See also Leela Kasturi and V. Mazumdar, *Women and Indian Nationalism*, Delhi, Vikas, 1994, Introduction.

4. *Women in a Pattern of Learning*, Bombay: Vohra & Co., 1991. (Review forthcoming by CWDS.)
5. Like the missing millions of women in the population of various Asian countries. — Ananya Sen, *India and Africa: What do we have to learn from each other?* United Nations University, Wider Discussion Paper No. 19, 1987.
6. Leela Kasturi, 'Development Patriarchy and Politics: Indian Women in the Political Process — 1947-1992', in *Patriarchy and Economic Development: Women's Position at the End of the Twentieth Century*, by Valentine M. Moghadam, Oxford: Clarendon, 1996; Matrevi Chowdhury, 'Citizen, Workers and Emblems of Culture: An Analysis of the First Plan Document of Women', in *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, new series, vol. 27 (18&2) Jan.-Dec. 1995, Special Issue, Social Reform, Sexuality and the State, pp. 211-235; Vina Mazumdar and Rekha Mehra, *Women and Rural Transformation*, New Delhi, Concept Publishers, 1983.
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8. See note 3.
9. As stated by a union law minister, commenting on the controversial Muslim Women's (Protection of Rights in Divorce) Bill, 1986 — in the documentary *In Secular India*, Mediastorm, 1986.
10. M. N. Srinivas, *Social Change in Modern India*, Oxford University Press, 1982; *Changing Position of Indian Women*, Thomas Huxley Memorial Lecture, Royal Institute of Anthropological Sciences, London, 1977, Oxford University Press, 1978; CSWI, *Towards Equality*, chapter 1; A.S. Altekar, *The Position of Women: Hindu Civilization*, Motilal Banarasidass, 1978.
11. Satish Agnihotri, 'Juvenile Sex Ratios in India: A Disaggregated Analysis', *Economic and Political Weekly* (Special Articles), 28 December 1996. His full work which brought him a doctorate from the University of London is in the process of being published.
12. Vina Mazumdar, *Peasant Women Organize for Empowerment*, CWDS, 1989; Kumud Sharma, 'Grassroots Organizations and Women's Empowerment: Some Issues in the Contemporary Debate', *Samya Shakti*, vol. 6, Delhi, CWDS, 1992; N.K. Banerjee, *Grassroot Empowerment*, CWDS, 1985; Srilatha Batliwala, *Empowerment of Women's Autonomy*, Proceedings of a Consultation on Women's Health and Rights: Rethinking Population, *HIVOS Technical Report*, Series 1.4, 1996; Devaki Jain, *Women's Quest for Power*, ICSSR, Vikas Publishers, 1980.
13. I was her interpreter — present only in that capacity.
14. The seminar was convened by Ela Bhatt in the early eighties — to force us academics to respond to the women's questions.
15. *Feminist Ideology and Structures: Report of an International Seminar*, Asia-Pacific Centre for Women and Development, UNESCAP, Bangkok, 1979.
16. CSWI, Chapter 8.
17. See the next section for more on this extraordinary woman.
18. Asok Mitra, ICS, for one — see Volume 2 of his Memoirs.

19. CSWI, Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 8.
20. *Critical Issues in the Status of Women: Employment, Health, Education — Priorities for Action*, ICSSR, Advisory Committee on Women's Studies, 1977; Asok Mitra, *India's Population: Aspects of Quality and Control*, Delhi, Abhinav, 1978; Also *Status of Women: Shifts in Occupational Patterns (1961-71)*, Abhinav, 1979.
21. CSWI, Chapter 2. Also Asok Mitra, *ibid*.
22. Unfortunately all the documents have become victims of the GOI's current malady — the loss of institutional memory. But they can be found in the CWDS Library and in some publications — national and international.
23. *Indian Women in the Eighties: Development Imperatives*, All-India Women's Conference (AIWC), 1980.
24. See the Report of three such initiatives in *The Seeds of Change*, CWDS, 1986; *Who Will Save the Earth*, CWDS, 1987; and *Perspectives on Rural Development*; CWDS, 1988. Also Reports of Workshops by National Wasteland Development Board (1984) and Department of Rural Development (on Women and Credit), (1987) plus various publications of the ILO's India Office (1980s & 1990s).
25. Madhya Pradesh, for one.
26. Sri R.P. Khosla, IAS, in a personal conversation with the author in early 1985.
27. 'The National Perspective Plan for Women upto the Year 2000: Perspectives from the Women's Movement' (Mimeo), CWDS, 1988.
28. Mostly to reduce fertility and infant mortality not as basic human rights and responsibilities of the State — though GOI ratified both International Conventions — on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1993.
29. This entire section draws heavily on a note that the author prepared to assist the 9th Plan Working Group on Women and Child Development at the request of Dr Sarla Gopalan, then Secretary of the Department of Women and Child Development in 1996. If the language appears to be identical at places with GOI's official communications, the author should not be held guilty of plagiarism.
30. CWSI, Chapter 8
31. As required by the NCW Act, 1990.
32. Amended in the 1970s to raise the permitted age to 18 for girls and 21 for boys.
33. Agnihotri, *op cit*.
34. Amartya Kumar Sen, *Population Policy: Authoritarianism versus Co-operation*, MacArthur Foundation Lecture, New Delhi, 1995.
35. Mahatma Gandhi, cited by CSWI, Chapter 7.
36. Durgabai Deshmukh, *Chintamani and I*, Allied Publishers, 1980, pp. 29-30.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 3
38. Vina Mazumdar, *Women and the Political Process*, Durgabai Deshmukh Memorial Lecture, Council for Social Development, Delhi, 1993.

39. Ibid.
40. Indu Agnihotri and Vina Mazumdar, 'Changing Terms of Political Discourse: Women's Movement in India — 1970s–1990s', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 22 July 1995.
41. Vina Mazumdar and Indu Agnihotri, *The Women's Movement in India: Emergence of a New Perspective* (forthcoming).
42. Mary Fainsod Katzenstein, 'Getting Issues into the Pacific Agenda: Body Politics in India', *Samya Shakti. A Journal of Women's Studies*, CWDS, vol. VI, 1991–92; Leslie J. Calman, *Toward Empowerment: Women and Movement Politics in India*, Westview Press, 1992.
43. Indu Agnihotri and V. Mazumdar, 'Changing Terms of Political Discourse: Women's Movement in India — 1970s–1990s', op cit.
44. Nandita Shah, Sujata Gorthoskar, Nandita Gandhi and Amrita Chachhi, *Structural Adjustment, Feminisation of Labour Force and Organisational Structures*; Kumud Sharma, *Gender Environment and Structural Adjustment*; Joy R. Randive, *Gender Implications of Adjustment*, in Review of Women's Studies, *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 29, no. 18, April 1994; *National Population Policy: Perspectives from the Women's Movement*, CWDS, 1997; Vina Mazumdar, 'Historical Soundings', *Seminar*, September 1997; Vina Mazumdar and Indu Agnihotri, *The Women's Movement in India: Emergence of a New Perspective* (forthcoming); *Towards Beijing: A Perspective from the Indian Women's Movement*, New Delhi, AIDWA et al., 1995.
45. Vina Mazumdar, *Seminar*, op cit.

ASHOKE CHATTERJEE

NGOs: An Alternative Democracy

The 'tryst with destiny' to which Jawaharlal Nehru summoned his people at the midnight hour before freedom in 1947 has served ever since as a touchstone of Indian progress. What was the destiny this nation had pledged itself to redeem? Who was to achieve it, and how? Five decades ago, the answers seemed more straightforward. A democratic government, the first within societies impoverished by colonial exploitation, would infuse values imbibed during an extraordinary movement for freedom into new programmes of planned growth. These would deliver social, economic and intellectual freedoms to match India's political emancipation. That struggle had been illumined by Mahatma Gandhi's unique ability to demonstrate great principles through the ordinary processes of daily living. Leaders at the helm of affairs were heirs to his inspiration, and they would plan and act for justice and equity.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Fifty years on, pride in India's growth and unity is tempered by dismay that an acceptable quality of life still eludes most of its millions. Destiny is now debated in the language of 'sustainable development', which acknowledges the needs and constraints of both present and future generations. The emphasis today is on learning from the past, and not only from its achievements. Equal importance in the current reflection is placed on knowing what has not succeeded, and why, and in determining which voices most influenced crucial decisions. There is the lesson that the bedrock of sustainability is the assurance that those most affected by policies and decisions are the ones who make them. In this, India's chosen path of democratic governance has been vindicated over ideologues and sceptics who scoffed at a poor nation's faith in the ballot box. The issue being debated across India fifty years after freedom is not whether democracy was the right choice but rather how that democracy has worked. Particular attention is focussed on the discrete roles of authorities and citizens. Have democratically elected governments ruled from the top, or have decisions moved through them from below?

These debates are underlining changing perceptions of what governments in India can and should do, and what its people should be encouraged to decide and do for themselves. The emphasis is on 'civil society': the role of local institutions and citizens toward concerns that have too often been

overlooked in the course of political debate. These include basic rights, the empowerment of the poor and marginalized and the protection of natural and cultural diversity. In a new environment of market-driven economics, civil society must now also ensure that stakeholders in development influence not merely the state but the market as well. Development must be seen to start from where people live and work, as their alternative for tomorrow.

For almost forty years, the vision of a socialist society expressed India's allegiance to the ideals of its freedom struggle. This was to be achieved through a mixed economy, with centralized control of the commanding heights as a guarantee that the fruits of progress would be equitably shared. Non-government activity thus took its cues from policies and programmes handed down from above. Today's debates reflect the strengths which this approach provided in terms of the development of infrastructure and survival in a polarized world, and its inadequacies were revealed once globalization burst through India's door. The question being examined is what impact the new 'liberalization' will have on the poor who are India's vast majority. Access to new spaces created for the private sector, now free of ideological fetters, requires resources and organization. The deprived possess neither. After all these years, is the state to abdicate its social role? Or is this to be shared with alternative structures and new partners? In the search for answers, attention is increasingly focussed on 'non-government organizations', the NGOs in the 'voluntary sector' who through five decades have worked with communities in every corner of India to bridge the distance between the promises and reality of development.

The speculation on NGO possibilities is challenged by nomenclature. Neither the negativism of being called 'non-government' nor the misunderstanding of 'voluntary' as 'honorary' assist in understanding the dynamics of 'volunteers' who come together for reasons of interest and commitment — because they want to and not out of compulsion. It is this spontaneity that generates the drive and energy so evident in a sector that carries such a variety of labels. In addition to the ones most commonly used, there are other descriptions: action groups, development agencies, advocacy groups, support institutions, voluntary development organizations. People's action in India also encompasses many other citizens initiatives, movements and struggles catalyzed by ideology, religion or social group. Many are inspired by towering personalities (like Gandhi) or religious affiliation (such as Swami Vivekananda in the nineteenth century and Mother Teresa in recent times). There are activities that have responded to local need (as after the Bhopal gas disaster), or that of empowering disadvantaged groups (as in many tribal regions), or for meeting requirements of training and research. Some began small or local and stayed that way, as has Anandvan established in rural Maharashtra by the renowned Baba Amte to serve leprosy patients. Others, like Gram Vikas in Orissa, started work with a handful of volunteers in a remote community and have grown to cover hundreds more. A multitude of other movements

represents causes and beliefs, such as the Chipko struggle to protect Himalayan forests and the Swadhyaya reform group of Pandurang Shastri Athawale. Individuals have become institutions in themselves: Dr Arole's rural health schemes in Maharashtra, Laurie Baker's architecture for the poor in Kerala, or Dr P.K. Sethi's efforts with the 'Japur foot' now used by thousands of disabled in many countries. To add to the spectrum, there are autonomous bodies set up by the state, funding agencies representing foreign donors, religious charities and even development agencies sponsored by business houses and retired civil servants. The potential of this variety is in the richness of history and experience. Almost two centuries of peoples' action in India provides a foundation for today's development organizations, and to their commitment for social change.

A JOURNEY THROUGH HISTORY

The idea of people's action is rooted deep in India's history. Indian communities have for centuries found ways of joining at the local level to address shared concerns. Such traditional institutions have included village panchayats which oversaw local self-government, tribal councils, craft guilds, associations built around festivals, agricultural operations or sacred observances, customs of caste observance and decision-making, and affiliations of youth and women. Voluntary action in contemporary India draws sustenance from this past, and from the introspection and resurgence caused by colonial rule. It draws most of all on India's freedom movement, which Mahatma Gandhi predicated on personal and community empowerment. It was Gandhi's conviction that ending foreign domination was one essential step toward genuine emancipation. True liberty for him required that every Indian was enabled toward a quality of life based on respect for others as well as for nature's resources. Today, Gandhi's insistence has returned as 'sustainability'.

The reform movements which were to influence so much of India's subsequent history began in the early years of the nineteenth century. They responded to the impact of western ideas on the social and political awareness of a growing middle class. While Indian thinkers focussed their reforms on such issues as the status of women and the condition of so-called untouchables, their inspiration remained primarily religious. The towering figure of Bengal's pioneering reformer Raja Ram Mohun Roy symbolized this thrust. Founder of the unitarian Brahmo Samaj, Roy's concerns were echoed by other religious reform groups such as the Arya Samaj and the Ramakrishna Mission of Swami Vivekananda. Christian missionaries moved out of early urban settlements into remote areas and communities, first providing services of education and health. The Societies Registration Act of 1860, which has regulated NGO activity ever since, reflected the emergence of citizens' institutions in India. Within all these efforts lay the seeds of a nationalist consciousness. An attitude of self-help became discernible, taken forward by

literary and educational institutions that helped forge links across India's linguistic and geographical diversity. Its greatest expression was the founding of the Indian National Congress in 1885, soon to become the catalyst for a **freedom struggle**.

On his return to India from South Africa, these developments became a resource in Gandhi's decision in 1916 to establish his work at Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad. For the next thirty years, he worked from here to channelize the country's pain into political action and mass mobilization. Ever since, Indian voluntarism has taken its ultimate values and benchmarks from those which Gandhi used to monitor and assess the quality of his campaigns for freedom. Decades later, his hallmarks of self-respect and equity are inspiring in Indian response to the challenges of development amidst the **pressures of globalization**.

THE EUPHORIA OF FREEDOM

Once colonial rule was overcome in 1947, movements for social reform based on voluntary action joined the new government in tasks of nation-building. An euphoric team spirit reflected close personal bonds between those now in power and those working in the field. It was fostered by state-assisted cooperative movements and institutions such as the Khadi and Village Industries Commission set up to encourage and administer decentralized production and employment opportunities. The Tata Institute of Social Sciences and the SNDI University in Bombay were among the institutions established to train young Indians in social work. Religious institutions spread out into new avenues of service in health, education and technical training. In the east, the Lok Shiksha Parishad of the Ramakrishna Mission initiated its integrated village development programme, which was to reach 1500 hamlets in and around West Bengal. Church-related activists turned their attention to basic needs, as in central India where the Action for Food Production (AFPRO) provided technologies for safe drinking water systems. Optimism for change generated a sense of trust and partnership between **official bodies and social institutions**.

By the early 1960s, this marriage had begun to show signs of strain. Doubts had begun to arise whether the development model of a 'mixed economy' could deliver the economic goods, leave alone a desirable quality of life, for most Indians. While better standards had emerged for some, disparities between rich and poor had begun to widen. The 'trickle-down' theory seemed discredited. The decade endured periods of economic stagnation which matched its political crises. Some now turned to Marxist remedies for Indian poverty. The ruling Congress party responded with a more populist and socialist face, while a rebellion by Maoist factions in the police station of Naxalbari in West Bengal proved a watershed event of lasting consequence. Student movements reflected the turmoil, compounded

by seasons of flood and drought. These tested development alternatives offered by the veteran socialist leader Jayaprakash Narayan and activists influenced by him. Voluntary relief efforts were redoubled in 1970-1 with the arrival of millions of refugees from what was soon to be Bangladesh. The attention of northern NGOs was drawn to these experiences, and to the transition of their Indian counterparts from social workers to development organizations. Links between the north and south were soon to become **a feature of Indian voluntarism.**

The inspiration of Jayaprakash Narayan had brought together a range of young leaders with socialist and Gandhian motivations. Disappointed by both political ineffectiveness and Naxalite violence, they responded to his call for 'total revolution' through grassroot activity and organization under the student-led Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Vahini. Another influence came in from overseas: Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, its impact travelling well beyond its church connection. When an Emergency was declared in 1975, a heavy curtain came down over free expression and activity. The shock was intensified as activists in the voluntary sector became prominent victims. Within a year, other restrictive measures were enforced through the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act of 1976. Ostensibly meant to counter subversion, it became a thorn in the NGOs' relations with the state.

Short-lived though this dark period proved to be, it forced a profound re-evaluation of India's political processes. The politicization of a whole generation that had grown up in independent India lay shattered. Voluntary action became an obvious response to the vacuum. It spread rapidly, expressing the search for constructive alternatives. While prospects of a 'total revolution' had withered, the struggle against the Emergency had brought together many ideologies of the Left and Right. They now converged on development issues. Conscientization, people's participation and focussing on the needs of target groups emerged as dominant concepts. This vocabulary was applied to articulation and assisting apparently temporary problems through short-term project interventions aimed at self-reliance.

Social awareness campaigns proliferated in the decade of the 1980s, spurred and assisted by ferments in other countries of the North and South. The human rights implications on many fronts — among them gender, the environment, shelter, and child protection — encouraged the entry into the development sector of professionals trained in social work as well as in medicine, technology, science and management. Institutions set up in earlier years now provided role models of experience. Among these were Sewa Mandir and the Social Work Research Centre in Rajasthan, the Rayalaseema Development Trust in Andhra Pradesh, and the SEWA women's union in Gujarat. Offering themselves as resource centres, they soon provided seasoned 'alumni' who moved out to become catalysts for new development organizations. Other support became available through research, training and technical bodies. Examples include the Society for Participatory Research in Asia

PRIYA and the government-sponsored Council for Advancement of People's Action & Rural Technology (CAPART) which by the beginning of the next decade was churning out some 1000 projects with a budget of some Rs. 250 million. Many designers and architects joined teams working with Indian artisans toward the revival of craft traditions (through NGOs such as the Crafts Council of India, Dastkar and Urmil) and in environmental conservation efforts pioneered by the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), founded during this decade.

As radical changes emerged in economic policy, the state began its attempts at 'letting go' through contracting NGOs for the implementation of official anti-poverty programmes. In what was described as a concerted drive into the twenty-first century, technology missions introduced by Rajiv Gandhi harnessed enterprise and initiative from all quarters for the achievement of development priorities. These ranged from drinking water and sanitation to telecommunication, literacy and oilseed production. As India's youngest prime minister called on technocrats and social activists to join his forces, a challenging term entered the lexicon of Indian development: professionalism.

EMERGING ROLES

The concerns of the 1980s are today expressed through empowerment models that have emerged on issues such as gender, the environment and human rights. These models aim at sustainability by offering a macro perspective of work at the grassroots and a programmatic approach to problem-solving. With an estimated 15,000 registered NGOs (out of well over 100,000 identified people's groups), India is preparing for an expansion inevitable with new policies of decentralization and local initiative. The most important of these has come in the form of Constitutional amendments in 1993 to extend and strengthen the traditional Panchayati Raj system of village self-government. Panchayat units are intended to take charge of future development planning and implementation, signalling the most fundamental shift of power since Independence. It is a change that cannot succeed without major capacitation of the development stakeholders now placed in charge.

Building such human resources requires credible community-based institutions which command local trust and have an enduring local presence. The opportunity as well as the challenge for the NGO sector is obvious. Panchayati Raj reinforces policy directions set out in India's eighth Five Year Plan: 'It is necessary to make development a people's movement. People's initiative and participation must become the key element in the whole process of development. A lot in the area of education (especially literacy), health, family planning, land improvement, efficient land use, minor irrigation, watershed management, recovery of wastelands, afforestation, animal husbandry, dairies, fisheries and sericulture etc. can be achieved by creating

people's institutions accountable to the community.' Little wonder that even project proposal these days is fulsome in acknowledgement of the need for **NGO participation.**

Along with these immense possibilities come new dilemmas. One is whether co-operation offered means co-option demanded, with its threat to alternative ideas and identities. There is also the question of whether new needs require an NGO presence over a much longer term, with all the implications of such commitment. Again, the international donors now insisting on NGO participation are also demanding high standards of organization, accountability and transparency. These concepts are new and even threatening to many in this sector. Then there is the ideological battle with policies of structural adjustment now being implemented in the Indian economy. The overarching system responsible for the current decentralization is regarded by many activists as a frontal attack on the livelihood systems of the poor and as the cause for increasing displacement, migration and marginalization. The future of fresh opportunities may therefore depend greatly on how smoothly new understandings emerge between partners who share an uneasy past.

The shifts now taking place in NGO relationships with political authority can be of lasting significance. For all these years, voluntary organizations have been generally accepting the state as regulator and prime mover in every sector of development, and its virtual monopoly on development resources. The underpinnings for this position have now come loose with the spread of market forces. The implications of this shift are as profound for the voluntary sector as they are for the authorities once so firmly in control. Both are struggling with an ideological past that must now be connected to current pragmatism. Those once regarded as passive participants are expected to function increasingly as managers. One indication is the frequency with which NGOs are today called in for consultation on official policies and programmes. Whether their counsel yet carries the weight of that of an equal partner is another matter. Transferring authority is not easy, particularly as both sides remain wary. Authorities can resent the independence of those who till yesterday behaved as supplicants. There are fears of take-over by those whose administrative competence is doubtful. On their part, NGOs may resent anything which threatens to replace their fire with form-filling. Nor will agreement be easy when market-driven globalization policies and programmes are so enthusiastically welcomed by sectors of Indian opinion far more powerful than a dispersed and unorganized voluntary sector. Yet the desire for an easier relationship is palpable, encouraged by the global currents washing Indian shores.

Governments are not the only centres of authority with which equations must be worked out. Empowerment of the neglected and marginalized threatens an entire nexus of power brokers. Confrontation is inevitable. The nexus includes those who have dominated through tradition, wealth or

connection. Attempts at suppression of dissent have taken many forms, ranging from administrative barriers and financial threats at one level to political or social ostracism and physical violence. The abduction and disappearance of the brilliant young AVARD activist Sanjoy Ghose from his field base in Assam, the murder of Jesuit activists in Bihar and the ban on NGOs in 'guerrilla zones' declared by a Marxist peoples group in Andhra Pradesh have been glaring reminders of the price that some will extract when the dispossessed are given a chance to succeed. Survival may need political skills of a kind that the sector has avoided. It is as if in this golden jubilee of our existence as a free nation, we are once again being reminded that we are not really free. It is not for us to choose where and with whom we can work; for that reason, peaceful debate and integrity are at a discount."

Uncertain politics require more than survival of threat and intimidation. They demand new capacities, such as those of advocacy and lobbying. In the rush to market forces, priority must be sustained for investments critical to an acceptable quality of life for millions. To the long list of pending needs, new challenges have emerged. Among them are increased migration and its impact on urban centres, ecological crises, the breakdown of familiar family structures, danger signals in agricultural production, the surfacing of HIV-AIDS, and the spread of occupational diseases. All require that policies of decentralization transfer power and resources to the genuine control of communities.

The capacity to influence such public policy is relatively rare in the NGO community. Its past interactions have usually been restricted to contact with decision-makers, rather than organized as lobbying by interest groups. Strengthening this capacity can however draw on significant NGO achievements. The National Campaign for Housing Rights has impacted on policy change. Awareness created by the Centre for Science & Environment has been internationally acknowledged. The Voluntary Health Association of India has influenced drug policy through a network of some 3000 health institutions linked to VHAI chapters in 17 states. There is also growing experience in public interest litigation. It has been used toward protection of communities such as bonded labour and minority groups, regions such as the Doon in the Himalayan foothills and Silent Valley in Kerala state, neglected monuments countrywide, and of those affected by the AIDS virus. A landmark campaign by the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan in Rajasthan has established the right of rural communities to information on local development expenditures, challenging provisions of the Official Secrets Act imposed during British rule.

PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT

The emerging bottom line in this situation is the growing demand for the voluntary sector to function professionally: to demonstrate its commitment

* 'In memorium', *Seminar* 457, September 1997, p. 79.

with an ability to efficiently deliver a great variety of services. For older hands for whom 'voluntary' remains a pre-Independence value system expressed through honorary work for magnificent causes at great personal sacrifice, the jargon of contemporary management can smack of selling out, of the head taking over what the heart should feel. For others, 'organization' has been a necessary nuisance, demanded by the Societies Registration Act of 1860 which more than a century later still regulates the sector. A new breed of young men and women, emerging from specialist institutions and committed to social change, see little contradiction between values and structure. Their point is that without management skills, programmes cannot and will not succeed. Armed with cost-benefit and ratio analyses, they are bringing the language of the board room to bear on issues of deprivation, inequity and human rights. Through these apparently conflicting tensions and demands, a new need is emerging: benchmarks of quality, set and used by the sector to evaluate its own performance.

The need for effective networking within a variety of approaches and ideologies is proving essential not only for efficient access to information and experience. It has been a vital ingredient toward effective joint action for such complex issues as a response to the Bhopal gas disaster, to the ecological threat perceived in large dam and mining projects and to the extraordinary complexity of the HIV-AIDS crisis. Co-operation is also vital to the unity which can withstand threat. Yet working together has not always been easy in this sector. Often dominated by charismatic visionaries, the range of their personal commitments and ideologies has not been easy to reconcile. Attempts at federation are forcing a reappraisal of what was once considered a dichotomy between activism and professionalism. A younger generation of professionals has begun to apply its own standards of what constitutes prospects and satisfaction in careers they have chosen over more remunerative opportunities in the marketplace. Their arrival has brought another dichotomy with it. Will a 'professionalized' voluntary sector acquiesce to the rigid qualification systems demanded by custom? Or will it demonstrate a new respect for the wisdom and potential of grassroots experience? As management styles become a key concern, the highly individual ways of yesterday's leadership and the benchmarks of professional management are challenged in an environment of extraordinary flux and change.

FINANCING PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism is the buzz word used with greatest frequency wherever Indian NGOs struggle to raise and manage financial resources. Funding has traditionally come from one of two sources: government and overseas donors. In the years immediately following Independence, bodies were specially established to channel official support to the social sector. Among these was the giant Khadi and Village Industries Board, devoted to Gandhian concepts

of decentralized planning and the Central Social Welfare Board. Later more specialised funding institutions appeared, such as CAPART and the Society for Promotion of Welfare and Development (SPWD). Ministries and departments have actively co-opted NGOs in project implementation. The relationship has been coloured by carrot and stick tensions, and by accusations traded of bumbling and incompetence, as well as of corruption all round. Foreign funding has been an even more sensitive issue even as it has provided significant opportunities for genuinely innovative and participatory action.

While successive Indian governments have not been tainted by their enthusiasm for international aid, NGOs receiving overseas grants can be viewed with suspicion, even within the voluntary sector. Some of this dates back to times when the CIA was suspected of a preference for NGO beds. Later, forces of fundamentalism and secession began to seek cover organizations. Yet most of the fuss has to do with using the bogey of the 'foreign hand' whenever powerful vested interests are threatened by an NGO led campaign. Suspicion has other roots as well, such as distrust of minorities with outside connections. Misgivings also stretch back to the pre-Independence era when foreign influences were sought to be deliberately replaced through community action fired by aggressive self-reliance.

Despite these attitudinal complications, foreign funding is top-of-agenda for significant areas of voluntary action, and it comes in many forms. Some of this assistance is channelled through bilateral and multilateral institutions in official programmes such as those of the World Bank, UNDP or Unicef. In addition non-official donor agencies from overseas such as Oxfam, Actionaid, the Aga Khan Foundation and GIZ are assisting a range of NGOs who have undergone clearance through the onerous provisions of the Foreign Contribution Act, as many others wait patiently in its queue. While the importance of foreign assistance has proved undeniable, it brings the inevitable baggage of agendas set elsewhere. When the donor and the donation is large, it is these quarters that are most persistent in demanding 'professionalism'. They are the ones least patient with those who regard managerial competence as a sell-out to commercialism.

Fund-raising skills are today a key factor in the urgent priority for NGOs to raise a much larger share of their resources indigenously, and from outside official windows. This need is forcing closer contact with India's corporate sector, once shunned for its preoccupation with profitability. Times have changed. 'Margins' and 'surpluses' have acquired respectability as indispensable to NGO survival. Corporations also no longer regard activists as subversives or philanthropy as charity. New partnerships are pointing a way. ALERT, which works with leprosy patients in the Bombay area, raises some Rs 5 million each year through its corporate campaigns, and Oxfam India recently achieved Rs 3 million in its first attempt at seeking such support. Advertising agencies have assisted Child Relief & You (CRY) to raise almost Rs 50 million annually through sales of greeting cards. CHETANA, a health

groups. Although NGOs with different focuses have been at the forefront of working to meet the needs of women, children and people with disabilities, they are beginning to make their presence felt in the private sector, too, as they begin to market their products.

Various pressures converge on the voluntary sector. The growing wealth of the middle class is a double-edged sword. As a large segment of people find money and political opportunities appear and disappear **with dizzying speed**, longer-term NGOs working to meet important needs are being crowded out of existence. The issues of employment and financing will not be easy to raise, but they are among the whole picture of the future. The search for a link between education and employment at the local level, where cadre-based patterns of development programming have been a major factor, is a threat to their dominance.

A willingness to establish links of dialogue and contact with business men and women is one that may owe something to recent introspection and a growing acceptance of a notion that in its own flock of black sheep, India has seen a small resurgence of the spirit. Such a revival is political and commercial in character, but for reasons of pride and for the voluntary sector. A recent failure was acknowledged by a CAPART announcement that it was blacklisting NGOs on charges of improper financial practices. The need for codes of conduct and regulation is being debated, with some demanding official regulation and others that discipline must be self-imposed.

TOMORROW'S OPPORTUNITIES

Voluntarism in the FY 90s is therefore as marked by new demands and responsibilities as by opportunity. What started as social reform has veered toward development and modernization. New directions such as the constitutional amendments for Panchayati Raj will be impossible to implement without the capacitation by NGOs of those at the grassroots. Devolving decision-making processes closer to communities has in some countries put the voluntary sector at the centre of development (neighbouring Bangladesh is an example) and of political processes (as in parts of Africa and in Europe's Greenpeace movement). While the situation in India may appear less dramatic, change is unmistakable. Influential donors see NGOs as an often more effective alternative for channeling their assistance, particularly after the candid admission by the late Ravi Gandhi that less than 15 per cent of India's disbursements through government-controlled anti-poverty programmes actually reach the intended beneficiaries.

What this means is that the sector can today attract support for its ideas and experiments without quite the same barriers of resistance as yesterday. This is particularly useful as activities branch out into areas still unfamiliar such as gender and child rights, environment, occupational and reproductive health, and consumer protection. Each new challenge brings greater opportunity, demonstrated by the science education movements initiated by Kerala Sahitya Parishad in the south and Ekalavya in Madhya Pradesh, the environmental

agencies of the Government of India, and Education to Citizens and Self Help to work with primary agencies in areas of health and medical assistance, financial technology, and management capacity in industrial enterprises that are becoming important, are being applied in experiments, such as those related to urban livelihoods for Development Alternatives, or to rural enterprise management technology through the Community Extension Programme (CEP) of the United Nations in Maharashtra, Ahmedabad. Such experiments for very useful and technologically sound lessons included through management training, cottage of engineering and design, and other facilities including the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). These financial institutions are being formed, specifically targeted to the objectives of Agenda 21 as a priority under leadership by UNDP, in Ahmedabad and a variety of other multi-sectoral space inspired by Bangladesh model. There are among the numerous other areas of emphasis at professional training, in computer and computer based training with most appeal of a design innovation.

Following public policy toward these experiments will no longer be an open-ended technology sector. Effective solutions will be found, means for building an environment more enabling in local change of economic structure and economic adjustment being complex, some of equity and equity along with being a political environment opened to economic government of people's houses. A wider range of development alternatives to work on equity. The political climate demands political skills. The new generation of NGOs leaders appear to be able to handle some of the nature of political and management skill. This aspect will be more that can offer help and for and not a stronger social and political context, their commitment has been shaped by political bias. While the wider, challenging business structure and political structure may be the need, the need for the 'new' is likely to emerge. Therefore, it is more necessary that all development interventions is actually political, and it is important that provide the training power.

The greater commitment is to the vision of a new generation facing India's history and present, to reach a development paradigm that relevant to this era. In this, the vision of the past is not a mere historical together is an integrated understanding of what constitutes an acceptable quality of life for this and future generations. Here, as in so many other sectors of Indian life, a generation that has grown up in freedom is returning to the wisdom of the Mahatma.

In the search for alternatives relevant to a new millennium, Mahatma Gandhi's words find repeated utterance: 'The earth has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for anyone's greed.' That expression of a development agenda has acquired fresh and powerful relevance ever since world leaders put their signatures to Agenda 21 at Rio in 1992. If alternatives are urgent for the survival in dignity of millions on this planet, India's voluntary sector can turn its strengths to much more than demonstrating efficiency in a

mainstream defined by market forces. The mainstream itself can be encouraged to change, from being greed-based to need-based. India can help establish that development derives sustainability from people mobilized on their own terms, and put in charge of their own destiny. That is the trust long awaited by so many, here and in every part of the world.

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Education: Uneven Progress, Difficult Choices

INTRODUCTION

In terms of their absolute numbers, educational institutions in India and the enrolled student population both showed very impressive rates of growth at all levels of education, from the primary to the tertiary, over the last fifty years. That itself being cause for a celebration of sorts, we may begin by noting some of the facts in this respect first. However two other questions are also crucially involved in any real assessment of educational progress. These are about (a) how these numbers look when compared between the states, regions and communities, and between boys and girls, and (b) how good can be said to be the quality, and how relevant for society the content, of the education that is being dispensed. We will have to turn to these questions eventually.

As one finds from *Education for All* (GOI, 1997), the expansion in elementary education since Independence has been rapid and large in terms of the number of schools as well as enrolment of students. The number of primary schools (Classes I–V) increased from 209,671 in 1950–1 to 565,786 in 1991–2. For the same years the number of upper primary schools (Classes VI–VIII) increased from 13,596 to 152,077. In addition to these schools, by 1991 there were 270,000 non-formal education centres and between them there were 136 million children enrolled as compared to about 23 million in 1951. The most spectacular increase was at the upper primary stage where the enrolment jumped from three million in 1950–1 to 35 million in 1991–2. It is true that these enrolment figures are somewhat misleading — if true, these would justify the claim made in *Education for All* that 'Universal provision for education has been achieved in substantial measure at the primary stage (Classes I–V). Though such a claim may have to be largely discounted in view of (a) the unreliability and ambiguity of the available official enrolment figures taken from school records and (b) their incompatibility with the statistics generated from the many independent official surveys that are undertaken periodically (such as several rounds of the National Sample Survey, All India Education Survey and so on) there can be no doubt that the expansion of elementary education has been very substantial in absolute terms over the last fifty years.

At the other end of the spectrum, there was equally spectacular growth in the number of institutions of higher education and the enrolment of students in the tertiary sector. There were only 25 universities and 700 colleges in India in 1947. By the mid-1990s the number of universities including deemed universities and Institutions of National Importance had risen to 214 and is still growing. There were 8210 colleges in 1994 and that number too is rising with every academic session making a head-count somewhat difficult. The number of students in the higher education sector was a little over 100,000 in 1947. By 1994 that number had grown to over five million or fifty times (Desai, 1995 and Majumdar, 1996)!

Whatever may be thought of the sheer numerical expansion of educational institutions and the student population after Independence, the picture of India's educational progress has been very badly marred by two gross deficiencies. The distribution of educational attainment and the access to education both continue to be inequitable among regions, communities and genders. Moreover, the education imparted is often found on an average to be of poor quality and sometimes irrelevant from the point of view of the needs of the workplace.

It is not that the founding fathers had not placed enough importance on the task of building a system of education that would fully match the needs and aspirations of an independent India. In fact, long before Independence, leading thinkers like Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi and political figures of the stature of Jawaharlal Nehru, Abul Kalam Azad and Zakir Husain had been advocating basic structural reforms in the education system. Not surprisingly, immediately after Independence and before any other developing country not excluding China, India had started preparing for the building of an education system that would fit into the modern industrial world, making India an educationally and technologically advanced country in the shortest possible time.

In the following section we will first briefly describe the massive restructuring of the system that India's national education policies (which, at least until the mid-1970s, would very often cut across political party lines) had envisaged. It is also important to remember that successive governments at the centre and the states were able to a remarkable extent at putting in place the highly complex and meticulously planned education system India has today. The apparently massive failures of that system too have to be seen, therefore, in the context of the great intrinsic capabilities, mainly in terms of human resources, that the system had undoubtedly created.

NATIONAL POLICIES OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH: VISIONS OF DEVELOPMENT

After the adoption of the Constitution the first important sign of central determination in co-ordinating the entire education sector of the country

came with the enactment of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956, leading to the establishment of an autonomous UGC as the apex body of the entire university system. The universities in India are themselves all set up as fully autonomous institutions under their respective acts of Parliament for the central universities and acts of the state legislatures for the state universities. Since all colleges in India have to be affiliated to universities, not only the university departments but also the several thousand affiliated colleges came under the jurisdiction of the UGC at one go.

The University Grants Commission was entrusted with the task of not only determining and disbursing central grants to this vast system, but also of bringing a semblance of order and of equivalence of standards in university and college teaching, and of uniformity in the pay scales and conditions of work of literally the tens of thousands of university and college teachers of India. The UGC, first under C.D. Deshmukh and then for a very long spell under D.S. Kothari, had faced the challenge of this stupendous task with courage and great foresight and was able to establish a tradition of acting as an independent mediator both between the universities and government, and between the centre and the states, in the true spirit of India's federal constitution.

Almost simultaneously with the setting up of the University Grants Commission for the conventional universities there appeared on the scene new educational and research institutions and agencies operating outside the UGC system. Some of the most important among them were the Indian Institutes of Technology established (from 1959 onwards) at Madras, Kharagpur, Kanpur, Bombay and Delhi as a sequel to the passing of the Indian Institutes of Technology Act 1956. The basic mandate of the IITs and other institutions in the field of technical education was summed up in the Science Policy Resolution (1958): 'to foster, promote and sustain scientific research in all its aspects — pure, applied and educational; to ensure adequate supply of research scientists of highest quality; to encourage programmes for the training of scientific and technical personnel to fulfil the country's needs in science and education, agriculture, industry and defence.'

Beside the IITs there also appeared other types of institutions of specialized education and research outside the UGC system that made the higher education sector in India a richer and more sophisticated structure than what one can see in any other third world country. Some of these institutions are the agricultural universities, institutes of medical education and research like the All India Institute of Medical Sciences and a whole range of national laboratories set up by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.

With the appointment of the Education Commission (1964–6) under Kothari's chairmanship, his vision of a symbiotic relationship between the education system as a whole and national development was combined with that of J.P. Naik, the other great Indian educator of the time who was named

the Member Secretary of the Commission. I quote from the famous Resolution of the Government of India which set down its main terms of reference:

education, in especially science and technology, is the most powerful instrument of social transformation and economic progress and the attempt to create a new social order based on freedom, equality and justice can only succeed if the traditional educational system was revolutionized both in content and extent.

The Report of the Education Commission (1964-6) was submitted in June 1966. The Government of India adopted a comprehensive Resolution on the National Policy of Education in response in 1968. All subsequent national education policy statements in India have taken the now famous report of the Education Commission (1964-6) as their basic point of reference.

THE LONG-DISTANCE APPROACH

Over the last fifty years, and particularly since the adoption of the Constitution of India in 1950, India's national policies have all had to conform to the parameters defined for a framework of government that was designed to remain scrupulously federal in almost all normal circumstances. But the driving force behind government for at least the first three decades after Independence, almost in every sphere, and barring in one or two notable exceptions in every state, had been the central government's policy initiatives mainly backed, directly or indirectly, by the centre's great reservoir of financial power. So far as the education sector is concerned, the Indian Constitution had provided for a division of legislative and administrative responsibilities between the centre and the states in which education, particularly school education, was made almost exclusively a state subject barring the centre's right to bring in legislation in Parliament in certain areas. However, through the instrument of direct central financing of universities and other institutions in the education sector (whether in conjunction with the state governments or otherwise), the centre has always been able to retain the whiphand.

There was, of course, also a specific provision in the Constitution that gave the centre the responsibility for 'co-ordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions', though one should add that this responsibility cannot be said to have been always fully discharged firmly or effectively by the competent central ministries or the agencies (such as the University Grants Commission, the Indian Council of Medical Research, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, and so on) that had been brought into being often for this very purpose through various acts of Parliament.

Apart from the centre's ability to pull the financial strings and thereby exercise effective control on the subjects that belonged to the state list in

practices of central government in the education sector in particular has always remained dominant even at the political level. Thus, perhaps with what paradoxicality the basic constitutional intent of the basic federal structure of the Indian Constitution, Indian national education policies (like the Indian Five Year Plans themselves) have always originated and to the extent possible, been propelled by the centre. The founding fathers had conceivably envisaged some body like the National Development Council, representing the central as well as the state governments at their highest political levels, to be the right forum where national policy decisions, particularly those covering the state subjects, would be taken. But in effect, and even for subjects like education that perhaps were seen almost universally as the natural preserves of the states and the local governments, national policies have been invariably initiated by the central government, and presented to Parliament after (or sometimes even before) only nominal consultation with the states.

Over the past twenty years during which the monolithic ethos of the Indian polity has so often been successfully challenged at the political level, central dominance in the formulation of education policy has nevertheless been unabated. Curiously, the dominance continued quite regardless of which parties or group of parties ruled at the centre. The bulk of public expenditure on education, however, always came out of the state budgets (see *Budgetary Resources for Education 1951-52 to 1993-94*, Ministry of HRD, GOI 1995).

The dominance of the centre in the sphere of education was made more direct in 1976 (during the Emergency) through the 42nd Amendment of the Indian Constitution that put education on the Concurrent List of subjects to be dealt with both by the centre and the states. However more recently, in 1993, there was a shift in the other direction when the federal structure of the Indian polity was extended further by the 73rd and the 74th Amendments of the Constitution, already referred to above, that have included school education as a subject on the list for the village and the municipal local governments too.

As a consequence of the 1993 amendments, the responsibility for providing school education would now rest on the governments at all the three levels — the centre, the state and the local. Moreover, the local level of government itself is now to be a three-tier structure that will comprise the village as the base, a group of villages (or a 'block') in the middle and the district at the top.

The three-tier structure or local self-government has been called the Panchayati Raj. The Panchayat was the effective old village government of India — an institution that Gandhi greatly admired and had wanted modern India to re-establish in its full ancient glory. It is undeniable that India's comprehensive failure to operationalize the Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 45 of the Constitution, see Basu, 1996), enjoining the provision of free and compulsory education for all children, has been mainly

due to its inability to activate collective community effort at the village level — the level that Gandhi himself had always considered crucial even for the bare survival of the Indian polity. What one notices, however, is that while the devolution of political power through the 73rd and 74th Amendments certainly envisages an increased role of the Panchayat institutions vis-à-vis the state governments, this too does not necessarily imply any significant alteration in the overall role of the Union government in the education sector.

Quite apart from the question of fulfilling the aspirations of a federal constitution, two propositions can perhaps be legitimately advanced in respect of India's national education policies formulated over the last fifty years. First, the policies have often gone awry mainly because they tended to look at the issues from a distance, taking the central (or at most a state's) point of view when the object could only be sighted locally. The error from taking a long-distance view was again usually compounded by the assumption of a public-sector paradigm in education that insisted on giving a lead role to the institutions and agencies set up by the government for the education system right from the primary to the tertiary levels. Secondly, and possibly as a consequence, the macro-level targets placed before the country by a national policy statement were invariably either partly irrelevant to various local-level needs, or plainly unattainable, having been set without regard to the local human resource capabilities that crucially matter. The centralized approach to education policy has therefore been generally unsatisfactory at all levels of education; for elementary education it has sometimes proved disastrous. Not surprisingly, the outcome of the national education policy formulated at the centre has been widely divergent in the states of India.

DIFFERENT STATES: DIVERGENT IMPACTS

One finds that for at least 16 states of India that together cover nearly 97 per cent of the total population of the country (Census of India, 1991), there is a fairly clear-cut division into the relatively well-performing states and the badly performing ones in terms of indices of educational attainments.

In the first group (Group A), there are the 10 relatively well-performing states of Assam, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. Haryana and Himachal Pradesh are late entrants, their past performances being either poor or inconsistent. These 10 states carry a little over 45 per cent of the Indian population. So far as the tiny state of Himachal Pradesh is concerned, its current rate of progress is so remarkable, as a recent survey by Drèze revealed, that it may soon take the state right to the top of the league next to Kerala itself which has been the star performer in the social sector of India, particularly in literacy, primary education and primary health care! In Group B are the six states which have been consistently below-average performers: Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan and India's most

populous state, Uttar Pradesh. The six states account for over half (51.30 per cent) of the Indian population.

An earlier study of the state of educational disparities in India by Majumdar (1993) had noticed that as many as 14 major states of India fell more or less neatly into these two groups from the point of view of consistent educational attainments over the thirty-year period 1961-91. Haryana's recent performance and the startling progress of Himachal Pradesh had not been noticed in that study. Since even the 14 states covered in the earlier study accounted for as much as over 94 per cent of the total population of India, it might be interesting to highlight briefly the following findings of the study:

It was found that if the criterion admitted was consistent performance in terms of either (a) the overall literacy rate for men, or of persons (men and women taken together) or (b) the size of the overall student enrolment in schools, then a group of eight states (Group A) was found consistently showing performances that were better than the all-India average, and equally consistently a group of six states (Group B) was found performing worse, over the entire 30-year period of 1961-91. But no such clear-cut division was noticed if the criterion chosen was (c) the rate of literacy achieved by women only, or (d) the proportion of the enrolment of the girls only among all children going to school.

What comes out clearly in the study is that when attainments of men are taken into account, the better progress of the Group A states was obvious, but not at all when one looks at the case of women. Women, compared to men, were almost equally worse off everywhere in India in terms of educational attainment, except in Kerala. Incidentally, this was also the main finding with respect to certain other social sector indicators of well-being such as access to health services.

One important fact, not usually noticed in these state-level studies, that is increasingly gaining the attention of analysts needs to be mentioned here. Just as the all-India figures tell us little about the relative educational attainments in the states, the state-level figures themselves are still far too centralized. For example, Assam belongs to the group of eight good performers. Yet the level of literacy and the state of primary education in some of its tribal areas has been very poor, which fact has often gone unnoticed and neglected at the state level.

One is tempted often enough to offer simple and clear-cut politico-economic explanations of the divergent impact of national education policies on different states or regions, in terms of which political parties ruled which states. But a closer study of the disparities within the same state and between men and women suggests that the real explanation of disparity is likely to be far more complex. For one thing, which political party with its particular brand of socio-political and economic ideology ruled a state might not turn out to be one of the big determining factors. The Congress Party, as is well

known, ruled both at the centre and in most of the major states of India for nearly three decades after Independence. Both the ideological orientation of that party and the personal characteristics of its most powerful leaders, particularly Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi, indicate that government under their control genuinely favoured massive doses of public investment in the education sector at all levels.

In fact, the Report of the Education Commission (1964-6) (Government of India, 1966), and its almost total consensual acceptance by the political elite as a guide to India's national education policy obviously suggested only one thing: Indian political leaders, both inside and outside the Congress Party, who had been among the first among the rulers of the third world nations to join the race for rapid economic development, had placed almost all their bets on increasing the pace of growth of human capital. For an otherwise poorly endowed but democratically run country there could have been no other choice.

THE MOTHER TONGUES OF INDIA

The Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India lists India's national languages. The number of languages so far put on the Schedule is eighteen, comprising Hindi, Telugu, Bengali, Marathi, Tamil, Urdu, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Oriya, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Assamese, Konkani, Manipuri, Nepali and Sanskrit. However, the Census of India had officially listed even in 1961 as many as 1652 mother tongues that were not recognized as official languages in any state or were not among the national languages listed in the Eighth Schedule. During the 1971 Census, more than 3000 such mother tongues had to be recorded at the instance of the informant households, as reported by the Deputy Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities (Government of India, 1985b)! This stupendous number could possibly be partly spurious (see Brass, 1994), as there could have been a substantial degree of multiple-counting because the households had been left free to name their mother tongues just as they liked. Very often the same mother tongue was given just a different name. Moreover, a very large number of declared mother tongues were found to have only a handful of speakers each; the number, in any case, was quite small in the large majority of the cases. Even so, the number of mother tongues spoken by, say not less than half a million people each, would be quite enormous in India today.

Even the 1971 Census had listed as many as 33 Indian languages that were then mother tongues for more than one million people each! The names of all these languages are fairly well known to most educated Indians and their rich and varied literatures are important components of the fabric of modern Indian culture. But almost half of these languages are not officially recognized as among India's national languages.

The most respected list of Indian languages is, of course, the one that appears on the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India. To make it to the Eighth Schedule is by itself an important measure of success for an Indian language: one's speakers are likely to value highly, for then they can claim the protection of the centre as a separate cultural community. If a language also happens to be that of a minority group in any of the states or in the country as a whole, then its speakers may actually find it easier to get themselves covered by the Fundamental Cultural and Educational Rights guaranteed under Article 30 in Part III of the Constitution of India (see Basu, 1996).

There are eighteen languages currently on the Eighth Schedule. Of these, Hindi, many experts point out, is not a single language. It is probably best described as actually a collection of 46 affine languages of Northern India, all using the Hindi script. A number of these languages like Bhojpuri, Chhattisgarhi, Magadhi, Maithili, Marwari, Rajasthani, Garhwali, Pahari, Kumaoni and Lamani/Lambadi have rich literatures of their own. The 10 languages mentioned above were all included in the 1971 Census list of 33 most populous languages of India referred to above (see Brass, 1994, Table 5.1). All the 46 languages have been included under Hindi which is the official language of India, along with English, which enjoys the status of an associate official language as well as an alternative medium of instruction in many Indian states.

There are also a large number of Indian languages, many of which are tribal languages, not mere dialects, that are not on the Eighth Schedule and may or may not be even among the 33 most populous languages listed by the 1971 Census. These had nevertheless to be recognized as official languages in many of the states on account of their predominance in local use (see Majumdar, 1996 for an extended list of tribal languages recognized as official languages in the respective states).

In a tribal belt stretching over mainly Bihar and West Bengal, for example, live the Santhals who speak Santhali (number of speakers: 3.7 million as in the 1971 Census, included in the list of the 33 most populous languages in 1971, but not put on the Eighth Schedule). Santhals live in other parts of India too but are predominant mainly in this belt. In recent years the demand for education through the medium of the Santhali language has become one of the rallying points of the movement of the Santhal people who are striving for a separate autonomous Jharkhand region or state. Santhali, it may be noted, has now for some years been officially recognized in the two states of Bihar and West Bengal (where the majority speak Hindi and Bengali respectively, both Eighth Schedule languages) as a medium of instruction.

In fact, in some of the smaller states, all situated in Eastern India, not one of the Eighth Schedule languages originally listed by the Constitution used to be either spoken by the people or accorded acceptance as an official

languages of the state! These states were Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim where, in addition to English, there are multiple local languages in each state which are all official languages. The basic education of children in these parts of the country would be almost inconceivable unless it was imparted through one or the other of these languages!

The absurdity of taking a centralist view of the language question in these Eastern states of India has only slightly been moderated recently by the 71st Amendment of the Constitution (Government of India, 1992b), which put Nepali on the Eighth Schedule (after prolonged agitation by ethnic Nepalis) and, less controversially, Manipuri. The other Indian language that had also made it to the Eighth Schedule through the 71st Amendment was Konkani in Western India.

It is quite clear that the basic needs of education at the level of the child are largely linguistic and so these can be handled only at the local level in the country which counts at least a few scores of mother tongues (or akin local languages when they are acceptable). This understanding of the basic issues in Indian education provides one of the strongest arguments for the decentralization of public investment decisions in education and the devolution of the political power working behind such decisions down to the village Panchayats and town municipalities in India. Such devolution is only partly provided for in the 73rd and the 74th Amendments: it still depends on the central government and the state legislatures which have to decide how much power can be transferred down to the Panchayati Raj governments.

One of the main factors contributing to the great variation seen in the educational attainments among the Indian states and among regions is without any doubt the neglect of the genuine mother tongue as the medium of instruction at the primary stage. Over-centralization and the consequent remoteness of all crucial decision-making in the education sector may have largely accounted for this neglect. It is the crucial local initiative that has mostly been found missing in the formulation and implementation of education policy in post-Independence India. It is as if Gandhi's concept of *gramswaraj* (the sovereignty of the village) had only been routinely paid high tribute to by India's politicians but not accepted as a practical proposition even by those who claimed to be his ideological heirs whether inside or outside the Congress party.

It must have been this all-round scepticism about the efficacy of local initiative that delayed the final articulation of India's federal structure until the 73rd and 74th Amendments of the Constitution in 1992. It could well have been partly due to this general disbelief in local self-government's ability to generate the desired momentum in the expansion of literacy and primary education in the country that the Panchayati Raj legislations, routinely enacted in many of the states under Congress Party government in the early years after Independence, had been allowed to die out. Urban scepticism

might be a factor standing in the way of the induction of the third tier of government at the district and village levels in many of the states. Moreover, the paradigm of a command economy and its subset, the paradigm of a dominant public sector in education, had both been accepted by almost the entire spectrum of political opinion in the country. Therefore, the absurdities inflicted by an alien system of education never had the chance of getting removed naturally through any systematized but local popular action.

A FAILED PROMISE: EDUCATION FOR ALL

A synoptic account of how India's objective of providing free and compulsory education for its children has remained elusive, in spite of sustained macro-level effort over all these decades, is given below. One may cite this as an example of the macro-approach in India's national education policy and its general failure. It all began with the enunciation of the Directive Principles of State Policy contained in Article 45 of the Constitution of India that said: 'The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.' The expression 'the State' had been defined by Article 12 of the Constitution 'to include the Government and Parliament of India, the government and the legislature of each of the states and all local or other authorities within the territory of India or under the control of the Government of India' (Basu, 1996).

The Directive Principles of State Policy had been generally thought of in knowledgeable circles as lacking in mandatory force — quite unlike the Fundamental Rights — and, therefore, not justiciable in courts of law. A new trend, however, in the progress of constitutional democracy in India that has emerged in the shape of interventions by the higher judiciary, has taken many observers by surprise and may set the pundits thinking all over again. A brief account of this important phenomenon will be given a little later.

It was as far back in 1949, when the Indian Constitution was still on the anvil, that the leaders of nearly all political parties sitting in the Constituent Assembly had held that making arrangements for the provision of free and compulsory primary education for all the children of India should take no more than ten years! The target date was fixed, on that basis, as 1960.

In the event, as was only to be expected, 1960 had come and gone with very little to show in terms of India's progress towards the goal. But over-optimism, instead of being curbed by this discomfiture, actually spread even to quarters where there were people who ought to have known better. The Education Commission (1964–6), for example, made public its opinion on the matter in the following terms: All the areas of the country should be able to provide five years of good and effective education to all the children by 1975–6 and seven years of such education by 1985–6 (Government of India, 1966).

The Education Commission's estimates were based on high hopes and very little else. For example, there was hardly any evidence of the understanding of the dimensions of economic constraint. The simple economics of free and compulsory education and the opportunity cost of moving away from child labour and the other related calculations were never really gone into, though everybody realized that the total cost would be enormous. The task of enrolling all the children into schools in a country of India's enormous size and diversity is tricky, and it has not yet been chalked out. One has to remember too that much of that task has to be undertaken not only at the centre but also at many of the lower levels of government down to the village *panchayats*.

In the event, it is hardly surprising that the Education Commission's estimate of the time schedule of compliance with Article 45 was to prove so embarrassingly wide off the mark. In 1986, after the deadline had passed, little progress could be reported to Parliament. But perhaps relying on the non-justiciable nature of the Directive Principles of State Policy, assurances continued to flow from the central government generally to the effect that 'the state' was still 'striving' to reach the goal set by Article 45 of the Constitution and thereby continuing to fulfil its constitutional obligation.

When the National Policy on Education 1986 (NPE, 1986) and its accompanying Programme of Action (Government of India, 1986a and 1986b) were presented to the nation it was clear that India's policy-makers had not yet learnt their lessons: the wide gap between high aspirations and the macroeconomic ground realities was allowed to continue in the policy statements and projections in the sphere of education, as elsewhere. NPE 1986 went on to declare, though commanding somewhat less credibility this time than previous such declarations had managed, that all children would be provided free and compulsory education up to the age of fourteen years by 1995!

To no one's surprise a revised version of NPE 1986 (Government of India, 1992), with an accompanying modified Programme of Action had to be presented to Parliament in 1992. What was surprising, however, was that the central government, with all its repeated past experiences with setting improbable target dates, still chose to make in the 1992 reformulation of NPE 1986 the bold commitment that stands to this day: 'Free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality would be provided to all children up to fourteen years of age before the commencement of the twenty-first century by launching a national mission.' The revised deadline gives the governments at the centre and the states (and, of course, added to them the newly empowered Panchayati Raj district-level local governments, hopefully being allowed to live their lives actively and effectively by the state governments), not even two years from the time of the publication of this essay. Some experts estimate that at the present rate of progress (actually also assuming that the bigger of the anticipated administrative, managerial and electoral

bordered by the new country ruled by the new Parliament Raj government, are removed quarterly through compulsory education for all up to the age of fourteen years as contemplated in Article 45 will take forty years to come to Bihar, about twenty years in Uttar Pradesh and somewhat shorter periods in most other states. As for education also being of a 'satisfactory' quality, that may remain a distant dream in most parts of the country for the next fifty years! These are rather gloomy forecasts and all forecasts into the distant future do have methodological problems as well as problems of credibility. But these may still be less serious than the problems of credibility created by the government's making impossible promises repeatedly before the country's **Parliament and the peoples!**

JUDICIAL ACTIVISM AND ARTICLE 45

The new trend in the interpretation of the Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles of State Policy under the Constitution referred to above has been hailed or, in certain quarters, viewed with some apprehension. It has been generally labelled as judicial activism, which is a good enough name for our purpose.

For the first time the higher judiciary in India (consisting of the Supreme Court of India and the state high courts) is calling into question the conventional wisdom drawn upon by the various authorities of the state, including the ones (like the formidable Election Commission) that themselves enjoy considerable protection under the Indian Constitution. Two landmark judgements delivered by the Supreme Court of India (1992, 1993) may be cited as among the early instances of judicial activism in India. These were the decisions pronounced on two public interest writ petitions. The first was brought against the state of Karnataka in 1992; the second, and the more celebrated one was the 1993 public litigation case of *Unnikrishnan v. the state of Andhra*, in which a five-member bench of the apex court decided, by the judgements of three judges against two, that the right to education was a derived fundamental right flowing from the citizen's fundamental right to live. It ruled that the Directive Principle contained in Article 45 mainly determined the parameters of that right, defining the state's duty to strive to provide free and compulsory education to every child up to the age of fourteen years. The court, for the first time, rejected the state's plea that it could automatically claim to be honestly 'striving' to follow the directive principle, when it was found to have failed to do so for forty years. It is as a follow-up of the Supreme Court judgement in the 1993 case that a committee of education ministers of all the states with Muhi Ram Saikia, then Central Minister of State for Human Resource Development as Chairman, was appointed to consider whether the right to education should now be explicitly included in the Constitution as a proof of the earnestness of the state in following the Directive Principle contained in Article 45. On the positive

and unanimous recommendation of the Saikia Committee the Constitution (83rd Amendment) Bill, 1997, was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on 28 July 1997. The purpose of the amendment would be to make the right to education up to the age of fourteen years an explicitly justiciable Fundamental Right for every citizen of India. As recommended by the committee, an expert group is now examining the cost implications involved for government in taking the necessary follow-up actions after the Supreme Court judgement.

WHAT ELSE COULD BE DONE?

A look at the level of government expenditure on education in a state should leave no one in any doubt that its share in the state budget or the state domestic product did not say much about either efficiency, equity or plain success in educational attainment. It can be checked that over a given number of years the variation of the share of public expenditure in either the State Domestic Product (SDP) or in the budget allocation may have no correspondence whatsoever with the classification of the states into the good (Group A) and the poor (Group B) performers!

Bihar in Group B, and one of the worst performers in the race for the universalization of elementary education, has been one of the top spenders on elementary education over some years in terms of the share of the budget allocation. It is shown to have spent 15.0 per cent of its budget on this item alone against the runner-up Kerala's 14.5 per cent in 1985-6. Again, in 1990-1 Bihar spent 15.4 per cent of the budget on elementary education, at the top of the list. Kerala had spent only 12.8 per cent. The second position in 1990-1 went to Assam (in Group A). Assam had spent 13.0 per cent and, astonishingly, Uttar Pradesh (a Group B state) had actually spent almost the same share (12.9 per cent) of the state budget on elementary education! Just for the comparisons, the all India averages for the state governments' spending on elementary education out of their state budgets 1985-6 and 1990-1 were, respectively, 5.1 per cent and 10.2 per cent.

It can also be checked that these were not isolated instances. Almost all the budgetary data for state expenditures on education for the years 1985-96 and 1990-1 would tend to show that no plausible correlation between public expenditure on education and educational disparities between states can be established or even suspected on that basis.

If one looks for clues to the question why some of the states (Group B) should be faring badly in terms of educational attainments and others (Group A) somewhat better, consistently over many decades, then the great temptation is to put it all down to the fact that for many years now the Indian states have been governed by different sets of political parties or their coalition fronts. This is done every day by political and economic commentators to explain away differences in the educational outcomes in the different states supposedly pursuing the same set of national policies. The explanation seems

simple and, if one does not look at the facts too carefully, also plausible, each state puts in more (or less) investments out of its budgetary resources according to its own political priorities and compulsions, and that produces the different results. One should not, however, fall for that simple explanation without due circumspection, because the state budgetary inputs, unless examined very carefully, are not so very divergent in terms of standard heads of outlays, no matter which party rules where.

Moreover, one should not, perhaps, read too much into the stated (or alleged) political and ideological differences of the Indian political parties. The current (that is at the time of this writing) alliance partners of the Bharatiya Janata Party that has assumed power at the centre, or the United Front which also contains the Left Front, or even the Congress Party as it stands today, each appears to contain widely diverse components with very different political ideologies. But at least when it comes to their education policies, every party, as of now, sings practically the same tune, which is that of political pragmatism. For example, the Left Front is known to be opposed to the 'privatization' of education but the Bharatiya Janata Party is not. But whatever their ideological differences, both have been found to be reasonably reconciled to the existence of the mixed, almost identical, systems of education wherever they happen to be in power, whether in West Bengal, Maharashtra or the centre itself.

DOES KERALA GIVE A CLUE?

In their recent work Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen (1995, 1996) raise several significant issues in India's development that may provide certain clues to answering our question: Why do some states in India perform better than the others in the field of education? And as one looks at the figures for all of India, the obvious supplementary question coming up next has to be: Can the other states of India, or the country as a whole, learn something from the little state of Kerala whose performance has been so outstanding?

Drèze and Sen felt that the Indian question could be answered only after we had looked around for some international comparisons. The countries that are the new 'Asian tigers', like South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore and Thailand, had all begun life humbly enough before they sprang. Not so long ago (actually in the 1950s) they were more or less level with India in terms of their per capita GNP. How were they able to outstrip India so comprehensively in the race for economic development? Was it only because they had much freer market economies? The authors did not find evidence to support that popular contention.

It was shown in their studies that India's initial parity with these other Asian countries was in terms of their per capita GNP comparisons only. The relative picture changed drastically if one looked at the other indicators of human development. These countries all had higher adult literacy rates, for

example, when they started on their rapid growth paths, than what India has now. The infant mortality rates in all these countries, to take another example, were way below India's

Drèze and Sen make the telling point that the tiny state of Kerala not only has far outstripped every other Indian state in terms of these and other social indicators of human development, it is, in fact, now in quite the same league as the Asian tigers! To the question whether the small state of Kerala could be a model for a big country like India, or even for the other Indian states, some of which are much larger in size, Drèze and Sen have a startling answer: Kerala (1991 population: 29 million) should not be seen as a small state at all, though it is smaller than some of India's mammoth states like Uttar Pradesh (140 million), Bihar (86 million), Maharashtra (79 million), West Bengal (68 million) or Madhya Pradesh (66 million). Kerala, in fact, is larger than most countries in the world! If India has lessons to learn from Sri Lanka, Hong Kong and Singapore, as development economists recommend, then one must also remember that each of these countries is smaller than Kerala. As Drèze and Sen point out, 'Even South Korea, which receives a great deal of attention in the development literature and is often seen as a development model, had about the same population in the early 1960s (when its rapid transformation began) as Kerala has now.'

But what lessons does one draw from Kerala's success story in the social sector in general, and the sphere of elementary education in particular? Drèze and Sen seem to suggest that essentially two things brought about Kerala's big success. First, Kerala had consistently pursued (both under the Congress Party and the Communist regimes) the right education policy of putting all the emphasis on primary education (and consequently little emphasis on higher education). Secondly, public action to back up the social sector priorities (primary education and primary health) had been the additional social choice instrument that had been handled with determination and vigour again by both the political parties in and out of power.

This however can be only part of the story. For, in the first place, Kerala's revealed preference for elementary education, measured only by what share of the state budget the government was allocating to it, was not always spectacularly stronger than that of several other Indian states, as has been already noted. In the second place, public action in many other Indian states has very often meant street action, and it is difficult to pronounce on its advisability in any particular case except in retrospect.

Unfortunately, the Drèze and Sen studies (1995 and 1996) may not have quite solved the Kerala riddle that lies at the heart of India's (that is, the Indian states') non-development syndrome. The riddle that still remains unaddressed is basically two-part: The first part is about the internal efficiency of Kerala's education sector itself: How is it that a state that is supposed to have had the solid benefits of a highly effective system of elementary education for at least fifty years does not have a higher education sector that compares favourably

with the other states of India that are educationally less endowed at the lower levels? Should not a significantly larger base of literate and school-going population have increased the probability of getting significantly better outcomes higher up when compared to the other states? Any comparison of the output of Kerala's colleges and universities with those of some of the other Group A states would show that the law of probability did not seem to have significantly worked to Kerala's advantage. Why has it not done so?

The second part of the riddle is even more perplexing from the point of view of the economics of development. Why is it that, with Kerala's truly fantastic record in the social sector indicators like adult literacy, life expectancy, infant mortality and birth rates -- that place it right alongside the Asian tigers -- its performance in the sphere of plain economic development has been poor compared even to some of the other Indian states? A plausible explanation could well be that the priority of elementary education over higher education, particularly higher scientific and technical education, had been wrongly overstressed in Kerala. Informed public action in those spheres too, and specially non-populist public action favouring quality over quantity in the production of highly qualified persons, might have prodded Kerala into the rapid industrialization path in the company of the other Asian tigers. I am personally convinced that this is that extra lesson in education policy to draw from the complex Kerala story, not for Kerala alone but for all the technologically aspiring states of India, and this lesson we have consistently failed to draw.

THE STATE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

It is well known that it is virtually impossible to run a first-rate university system anywhere in the world on student fees alone. Good higher education is, invariably, largely subsidized education, though this does not mean that all of the subsidy would have to come from budget allocations or from other public funds. The Report of the Punnayya Committee (1993) on the UGC funding of institutions of higher learning in India had pointed out (Punnayya, 1993 Table III.1), quoting OECD data that even in the advanced industrial countries, institutions of higher education could not be substantially financed out of student fees. The report of the committee had further said: 'There is a popular impression that in many countries the higher education sector is relatively self-sufficient, that is, it does not have to depend on either the state's support or support from outside funding agencies. This, however, is not borne out by the actual situation as prevailing in various parts of the world today.'

The Punnayya Committee, however, had not supported the populist position that the institutions of higher education in India need not try to break out of the present state-subsidized and state-managed system. On the contrary, it pleaded for the exercise of real financial autonomy of universities in the following sense: Not to rest on government subsidies; try to raise

resources independently from private sources; deal with research needs of the private sector industries without government prompting; sell the industries — and governments — the research outputs they needed; and to systematically teach them to use such outputs with profit: these are appropriate functions for all good universities and institutions of higher education and research anywhere, and more so in a developing country like India. But for doing all this, they need both public and government support.

The report of the Punnavaya Committee was strongly supported in this respect also by the Swaminathan Committee that was set up by the All India Council of Technical Education to look into the question of the mobilization of resources for technical education in the country (Swaminathan, 1994).

WHAT KINDS OF LITERACY FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY?

Finally, it is necessary to remember today that conventional literacy has to be strengthened by what is being called 'computer literacy' for every citizen of the future in order that even people with only elementary education will not feel lost, whether as consumers or as producers, in the twenty-first century. But then again, what *kind* of computer literacy should we try to promote that can empower all, rather than only some, citizens by preparing them for life in the high-technology society? Now that after fifty years of freedom the Indian people at last seem to be mustering enough political will to bear the cost of literacy for all, almost regardless of what that cost is likely to be, they surely have a right to know what the alternatives before them are.

For deciding what would be the most appropriate type of computer literacy for the twenty-first century one need not necessarily be swayed by only one aspect of education that had been highlighted by Schultz (1961) and Becker (1993) — the one that enhanced the productive efficiency of man. The next century's citizens may be equally anxious to acquire another type of literacy — the one that would make them not only more effective producers but also more efficient consumers and more effective citizens (see Majumdar, 1991). For the first kind of concern (for increased productive efficiency) what is needed is the type of literacy that would enable one to make effective use of one's personal computers for profit in profession and business both at home and in the workplace. For the second kind of concern (for increased consumer efficiency) what is needed is literacy that could empower all citizen to live their lives more fully in a high-technology society, without *having* to be affluent enough to own expensive personal computers. The two types of computer literacy may in some scenarios become substitutes from the standpoint of education policy because they may be competing for the same societal resources or subsidies.

As for the first type of computer literacy, only very few citizens of a developing country could afford to go for it, owning personal computers and eventually joining the ranks of elite 'knowledge workers' of the world. But

all the people will need to be given the second type of computer literacy to empower them to use the technology up. Indeed, it may be the universalization of *the* literacy that we will all soon want to be talking about. If setting up the education system for either type of computer literacy is costly and will demand substantial public subsidies, which one of the two should we rather see subsidized?

The type of computer literacy that will require the ownership of personal computers would be very necessary for the productive efficiency of the economy, but, as with human resource development for producing high-quality manpower, it would also be highly rewarding privately. Its claim to be socially subsidized to that extent, would be limited. The other type of literacy being not necessarily based on the ownership of personal computers would be more affordable and one can envisage its spread through the use of large computer systems installed in places like universities, colleges and schools, as well as the workplace. In fact, subsidizing this type of consumer literacy may be broadly like spending on general humanistic education as man knew it through the ages. Society had subsidized humanistic education for its own good reasons and may wish to subsidize citizens' computer literacy in the twenty-first century exactly for the same kind of reasons.

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ASHISH BOSE

Population: The Quest for Stabilization

EVOLUTION OF POPULATION POLICY

The road to population stabilization is long, arduous and full of pitfalls. This is borne out by India's demographic history during the first five decades after Independence. Unlike China, which took many somersaults in its population policy, India was consistent in advocating a population control policy right from the First Five Year Plan (1951-6). Yet, after the implementation of eight Five Year Plans, the goal of population stabilization is still eluding us. We have no doubt achieved remarkable success in Kerala followed by Tamil Nadu, and to a considerable extent in states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, West Bengal, Maharashtra and Punjab. The real cause for concern, however, is in the large states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

In the pre-Independence era, the debate on population centred round 'over-population', with one school of thought blaming British rule for India's poverty and another line of thinking, mostly Western, blaming excessive human fertility for India's misery. In the international debate too, Malthus and Marx were regarded as eternal adversaries and much of the argumentation was clouded by ideology. Scholars like Gyan Chand (author of *India's Teeming Millions*, published in 1943) did present a balanced picture and pleaded for 'birth control', rapid industrialization and selective emigration in order to solve India's population problem. Subhas Chandra Bose who initiated the planning process in India when he was president of the Indian National Congress did realize the danger from over-population and forcefully pleaded for population control. But it was left to Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of Independent India and the first chairman of the Planning Commission, to give concrete shape to population control by recognizing the need for state intervention through health and family planning programmes in the very first Five Year Plan. To quote from the Plan:

The recent increase in the population of India and the pressure exercised on the limited resources of the country have brought to the forefront the urgency of the problem of family planning and population control. . . . It is therefore apparent that population control can be achieved only by the reduction of the birth rate to the extent necessary to stabilize the population at a level consistent with the requirements of national economy.

The Planning Commission did not, however, spell out in statistical terms the implications of the goal of population stabilization. In fact, the Plan blundered in making long-term projections for the next three decades by assuming a *constant* growth rate of population of 1.3 per cent per year. It failed to realize that a growth rate of 1.3 per cent was the result of a crude birth rate of 46 per thousand and a crude death rate of 27 per thousand during the 1941-51 decade. Surely such a high death rate was not expected **to continue in a welfare state.**

The basic strategy in the First Plan was to treat family planning as a part of the health programme and provide 100 per cent funds for it as a centrally sponsored programme. The position continues to be the same even today. Increasing funds for family planning were allocated from one Plan to the other.

In 1966, a separate Department of Family Planning was carved out in the Ministry of Health in order to strengthen the population control programme. More staff was sanctioned, larger funds allocated, monetary compensation paid to acceptors of sterilization, motivators and guest doctors were paid incentive money, and above all an elaborate system of setting family planning targets was introduced and achievement figures closely monitored by the Department of Family Planning.

Looking back, one cannot help observing that this strategy, originating with western experts and foreign donor agencies, was partly responsible for commercializing the family planning programme, which inevitably led to widespread corruption and the fudging of figures on the achievement of targets. What is worse, in the eyes of the people family planning became synonymous with sterilization. The performance of medical and para-medical personnel was judged by the government on the basis of the number of sterilizations performed. Inherent in this strategy was an implicit **dowgrading of spacing methods.**

In 1975, Emergency was declared by the Indira Gandhi government. A crash Twenty-Point Programme was announced by the prime minister. It did *not* contain any reference to family planning. Sanjay Gandhi, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's younger son who emerged as an extra-constitutional authority, soon announced his Four-Point Programme which included family planning. He urged the state chief ministers to raise the targets. To please him, several state governments used the police and revenue officials to pressure innocent people to get themselves sterilized. The use of coercive methods reduced family planning to body-snatching. This incensed the masses in states like Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan where the Sanjay factor was most active. When the general election was ordered in 1977, Indira Gandhi's government was voted out of power.

In April 1976, during the Emergency, the government had announced a National Population Policy which was on the whole a balanced statement but it blundered on one point, namely on the issue of compulsory sterilization. To quote the policy statement:

Some states feel that the facilities available with them are adequate to meet the requirements of compulsory sterilization. We are of the view that where a State legislature, in the exercise of its own powers, decides that the time is ripe and it is necessary to pass legislation for compulsory sterilization, it may do so.

This permissive clause was undemocratic. When the Janata Government came to power in 1977, it announced its own National Population Policy which excluded this permissive clause, as the government was totally opposed to any coercion in the family planning programme. The government appointed a Working Group on Population Policy. Its report advocated a Net Reproduction Rate of one (NRR=1) by the year 2000, which meant a Birth Rate of 21 and a Death Rate of 9 per thousand. This implied a population growth rate of 1.2 per cent per year. This was considered as the threshold level for population stabilization. In 1997, we were nowhere near a Birth Rate of 21 except in Kerala and Tamil Nadu (excluding the tiny states of Goa, Nagaland and Manipur).

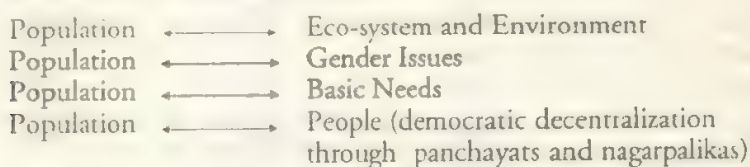
Here we may note that in 1983 the government announced a National Health Policy which was adopted by Parliament. The policy put forward a number of statistical goals such as reduction of birth rate, death rate, infant mortality rate and so on. The Health Policy suggested that a National Population Policy be formulated separately. When Rajiv Gandhi came to power, he launched a vigorous programme for immunization (*Immunization for all by 1990*). Looking back, this policy which had the backing of UNICEF did improve the state of child health. The reduction in infant mortality after 1985 cannot be wholly ascribed to the immunization programme but it did make a good impact. In fact, people welcomed this programme. Rajiv Gandhi wanted to restructure the family planning programme too, but he did not live long enough. The next major event was the constitution of a Sub-Committee on Population appointed by the National Development Council (NDC) under the Chairmanship of K. Karunakaran, then chief minister of Kerala. The committee submitted a bulky report in 1993.

As far as population policy formulation is concerned, the next major event was in 1993 when the Health and Family Welfare Ministry appointed an Expert Group under the Chairmanship of M.S. Swaminathan to draw up a Draft Population Policy for consideration by Parliament. In May 1994, the report of this committee was submitted to the prime minister and the union minister for Health and Family Welfare.

After a lapse into non-activity for three years, the Department of Family Welfare prepared in November 1996, a 'Statement on National Population Policy' which it claimed had the approval of the Health and Family Welfare minister. It copied extensively from the Swaminathan Committee but left out the fundamental philosophy of the proposed policy, namely relating population growth to the worsening eco-system, gender issues and basic needs, keeping in mind democratic norms. In short, the ministry's New

Population Policy was a distorted version of the Swaminathan Committee's **Draft Population Policy**.

On 15 August 1997, Prime Minister I.K. Gujral in his speech at the Red Fort talked of announcing a New Population Policy. It is worth recalling that President K.R. Narayanan in his speech at the special midnight session of Parliament (14–15 August 1997) observed: 'Social movements are required for fighting poverty, population growth and environmental degradation.' The philosophy of the Draft Population Policy prepared by the Swaminathan Committee in 1994 had the same approach. In brief, the four pillars of the policy can be schematically put as follows to bring out the interrelationship between demographic, social, economic and environmental factors in a democratic setup:



THE STATISTICAL PICTURE

India has a proud history of censuses taking dating back to 1881. In fact, there are very few countries in the world with a record of uninterrupted decennial censuses for over 100 years. The Census of India still continues to be the single largest source of data on the life of the people of India. But one must note that the census is a ten-yearly affair. From 1970 onwards, thanks to the Sample Registration System (SRS) introduced in the Office of the Registrar General, we have *yearly* data on birth, death and infant mortality rates. This greatly helps us to assess the demographic situation during intercensal years. In 1992–3, a large-scale sample survey — the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) — was undertaken, which gives useful information on demographic characteristics at the state level. This survey was sponsored by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India, funded by USAID, and the technical work was done by the International Institute for Population Sciences (Bombay).

On the basis of the latest Census (1991), SRS and NFHS data, we present a statistical picture of India and the constituent states and union territories which highlight demographic trends; we shall also briefly refer to population projections for the year 2001 done by an official committee under the Chairmanship of the Registrar General.

According to the first census in the post-Independence era, in 1951 the population of India was 361 million and it increased to 846 million by 1991 (Table 1.1). In absolute terms, the increase in population during these four decades was 485 million, an increase which is more than the

population in any country of the world except China. India's increasing *demographic burden* is reflected in the growing numbers of *absolute increase* in population every decade, in spite of a continuous but slow decline in the *growth rate*.

TABLE 1.1: GROWTH OF INDIA'S POPULATION 1951–2001

	<i>Population (in million)</i>	<i>Decadal increase in population (in million)</i>	<i>Decadal growth rate (per cent)</i>
1951	361	—	—
1961	439	78	21.5
1971	548	109	24.8
1981	683	135	24.7
1991	846	163	23.9
2001*	1,012	166	19.6

* Official projection.

Sources: Registrar General, India, *Census of India, 1991, General Population Tables* (Series I, Part II-A (i)), New Delhi, 1997.

Registrar General, India, *Population Projections for India and States, 1996–2016*, New Delhi, 1996.

TABLE 1.2: ESTIMATED BIRTH AND DEATH RATES IN INDIA 1951–94

	<i>Birth rate (per 1000 population)</i>	<i>Death rate (per 1000 population)</i>
1951–60	41.7	22.8
1961–70	41.2	19.2
1971–80	37.2	15.0
1981–90	33.3	11.9
1991–94	29.3	9.7

Source: Registrar General, India, *Sample Registration System (SRS), Occasional Papers and Bulletins*.

Table 1.2 gives a clue to this phenomenon. Both birth rates and death rates are declining but the decline in the death rate has been faster than the decline in the birth rate. It will be seen that from 1951 onwards, the decline in death rate has been 57.5 per cent while the birth rate declined by 29.7 per cent. During the British era, the death rate was shockingly high

on account of frequent famines and the heavy toll taken by epidemics of influenza, malaria, smallpox, cholera and so on. After Independence the government can certainly claim a better record. There has been no major famine; smallpox has been wiped out. Deaths due to malaria and communicable diseases have been negligible thanks to the techno-medical revolution all over the world and greater international co-operation. In passing, it must be mentioned that though there has been a substantial decline in *mortality* rates there is no evidence of a similar decline in sickness or *morbidity* rates. In fact, new diseases are emerging, standards of hygiene have worsened in cities, there are large slum populations. While explaining the arithmetic of growth, one considers the interaction between birth and death rates. So the morbidity rate, though important, does not feature in the calculation. In the absence of a decline in the birth rate (which depends on a host of social and economic factors, apart from the success of the family planning programme) matching the decline in the death rate, there is a spurt in population growth (generally referred to as a population explosion). In short, *success on the mortality front unmatched by a similar success on the fertility front creates the population problem*, but no welfare state can slacken its efforts to reduce mortality rates, in particular infant and child mortality rates.

At this stage, we should also note the significant increase in life expectancy which is one of the key indicators of the quality of life (see Table 1.3).

TABLE 1.3: EXPECTATION OF LIFE AT BIRTH, INDIA 1941–2001 (YEARS)

<i>Period</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Combined</i>
1941–50	32.4	31.7	32.1
1951–60	41.9	40.6	41.3
1961–70	46.4	44.7	45.6
1971–75	50.5	49.0	49.7
1976–80	52.5	52.1	52.3
1981–85	55.4	55.7	55.4
1986–90	57.7	58.1	57.7
1991–96	60.6	61.7	61.2
1996–2001*	62.8	64.2	63.5

* Projected figures

Source: Registrar General, India, *Abridged Life Tables* (various issues of *SRS Bulletins* and *Occasional Papers*).

It will be seen that life expectancy which in the closing decade of British rule in India, was only 32.1 years rose to 61.2 by the year 1996 — a very

substantial increase. And it is worth noting that from 1981-5 onwards, females' expectation of life has been higher than that of males.

In our concern over the growth of population, we should not ignore the striking demographic diversity of India, reflected in the *distribution* of population among different states and union territories, also between rural and urban areas, and within the urban sector, in different size groups of towns and cities, and so on. All-India figures often conceal more than they reveal and can even be misleading. Table 2.1 gives the population of three categories of states and union territories (UT) based on population size, the relative share of each state or UT to the total population of India and the decennial growth rate for the 1981-91 decade. The demographic scene is indeed baffling. One state alone — Uttar Pradesh — had a population of 139 million (if it were a country, it would have been the seventh largest country in the world in terms of population). The smallest state — Sikkim — had a population of only 0.41 million. When we turn to the decadal growth rate of population, we find that the rate is as high as 56.1 per cent in the small north-eastern state of Nagaland (indicating considerable migration from neighbouring countries of India and also from other states within India) while in Kerala the growth rate was as low as 14.3 per cent. In sharp contrast, in the large state of Rajasthan the growth rate was 28.4 per cent. In Madhya Pradesh it was 26.8 per cent, in Uttar Pradesh 25.5 per cent and in Bihar 23.5 per cent. These growth rates include the impact of migration (from one state to another and also international migration).

TABLE 2.1: DISTRIBUTION OF LARGE STATES IN INDIA
(MORE THAN 5 PER CENT OF INDIA'S POPULATION), 1991

	<i>States</i>	<i>Population in 1991 (in million)</i>	<i>Per cent of total population</i>	<i>Decadal growth rate 1981-91 (per cent)</i>
1.	Uttar Pradesh	139.11	16.44	25.5
2.	Bihar	86.37	0.21	23.5
3.	Maharashtra	78.94	9.33	25.7
4.	West Bengal	68.08	8.04	24.7
5.	Andhra Pradesh	66.51	7.86	24.2
6.	Madhya Pradesh	66.18	7.82	26.8
7.	Tamil Nadu	55.86	6.60	15.4
8.	Karnataka	44.98	5.31	21.1
9.	Rajasthan	44.01	5.20	28.4

Source: Same as in Table 1.1.

TABLE 2.2: DISTRIBUTION OF MEDIUM-SIZED STATES/UTs IN INDIA
(1-5 PER CENT OF INDIA'S POPULATION), 1991

<i>States</i>	<i>Population in 1991 (in million)</i>	<i>Per cent of total population</i>	<i>Decadal growth rate 1981-91 (per cent)</i>
10. Gujarat	41.31	4.88	21.2
11. Orissa	31.66	3.74	26.1
12. Kerala	29.10	3.44	14.3
13. Assam	22.41	2.65	24.2
14. Punjab	20.28	2.40	20.8
15. Haryana	16.46	1.94	27.4
16. Delhi	9.42	1.11	51.5

Source: Same as in Table 1.1.

TABLE 2.3: DISTRIBUTION OF SMALL STATES/UTs IN INDIA
(LESS THAN 1 PER CENT OF INDIA'S POPULATION), 1991

<i>States</i>	<i>Population in 1991 (in million)</i>	<i>Per cent of total population</i>	<i>Decadal growth rate 1981-91 (per cent)</i>
17. Jammu & Kashmir	7.72	0.91	28.9
18. Himachal Pradesh	5.17	0.61	20.8
19. Tripura	2.76	0.33	34.3
20. Manipur	1.84	0.22	29.3
21. Meghalaya	1.77	0.21	32.9
22. Nagaland	1.21	0.14	56.1
23. Goa	1.17	0.14	16.1
24. Arunachal	0.86	0.10	36.8
25. Pondicherry	0.81	0.10	33.6
26. Mizoram	0.69	0.08	39.7
27. Chandigarh	0.64	0.08	42.2
28. Sikkim	0.41	0.05	28.5
29. Andaman & Nicobar Islands	0.28	0.03	48.7
30. Dadra & Nagar Haveli	0.14	0.02	33.6
31. Daman & Diu	0.10	0.01	28.6
32. Lakshadweep	0.05	0.01	28.5

Source: Same as in Table 1.1.

Let us now turn to the growth in urban population (Table 3.1). Because of a relentless migration from rural areas, the rate of growth of urban population is invariably higher than that of the rural population and also the total population. It must be noted that India has a large urban population (comparable to the *total* population of the USA), though it constitutes a comparatively small proportion of its total population. The figures for the decadal increase in population have to be interpreted with caution. A stricter definition of urban in the 1961 census compared to earlier censuses was responsible for the low rate of urban growth (26.4 per cent) in the 1951-61 decade. It will also be noticed that there was a slowing down in the pace of urbanization during the 1981-91 decade, which, far from reflecting a satisfactory state of affairs, is indicative of the stagnation and slow growth of the Indian economy during the period.

TABLE 3.1 TREND OF URBANIZATION, INDIA 1951-91

Year	Urban population (in million)	Per cent of total population	Decennial growth rate of urban population (per cent)
1951	62.4	17.3	-
1961	78.9	18.0	26.4
1971	109.1	19.9	38.2
1981	159.5	23.3	46.1
1991	217.6	25.7	36.5
2001*	291.2	29.0	33.8

* Official projection.

Source: Same as in Table 1.1.

According to population projections, the majority of the world's population will live in urban areas by the middle of the next century, if not earlier. Our perception of big cities is mostly in terms of Western cities but in future the million-plus cities of the developing countries will dominate the urban scene in the world. Table 3.2 shows that the number of million-plus cities in India has risen from just five in 1951 to 23 in 1991; the proportion of the population of such cities to the total urban population of India has increased from 18.8 per cent in 1951 to 32.5 per cent in 1991. According to the projections of the National Commission on Urbanisation (1988), the number of million-plus cities will increase to at least 40 in 2001. In Table 3.3 we give the population and growth rates of individual million-plus cities. The decadal growth rate ranges from 18.7 per cent in Calcutta, which reached its saturation point long back, to 74.3 per cent in Vishakhapatnam where economic activity is flourishing.

TABLE 3.2: MILLION-PLUS CITIES 1951-91

Census year	No. of cities	Population in million	Net increase	Percentage increase	Population of million cities as a percentage of India's	
					Total population	Urban population
			(in million)			
1951	8	11.247	0.473	—	3.3	18.8
1961	7	16.102	6.355	54.1	4.1	22.9
1971	9	27.831	9.729	53.7	5.1	25.5
1981	12	42.122	14.291	51.3	6.2	26.9
1991	23	73.601	28.479	67.8	8.4	32.5

Source: Registrar General, India: *Census of India, 1991, Paper II of 1992, Final Population Totals, Post Analysis of Primary Census Abstracts*, New Delhi, 1993.

TABLE 3.3: POPULATION AND GROWTH RATE OF MILLION-PLUS CITIES, 1981-91

Rank	City	District	State/ Union Territory	Total popula- tion (in million)	Growth rate 1981-91 per cent)
1.	Greater Bombay	Greater Bombay/ Thane	Maharashtra	12.60	33.4
2.	Calcutta	Calcutta/Haora/ Hugli/North 24 Parganas/ South 24 Parganas/ Nadia	West Bengal	11.02	18.7
3.	Delhi	Delhi	Delhi	8.42	46.2
4.	Madras	Madras/ Chengai-Anna	Tamil Nadu	5.42	25.0
5.	Hyderabad	Hyderabad/ Rangareddi/ Medak	Andhra Pradesh	4.34	67.0
6.	Bangalore	Bangalore	Karnataka	4.13	39.9

<i>Rank</i>	<i>City</i>	<i>District</i>	<i>State/ Union Territory</i>	<i>Total popula- tion (in million)</i>	<i>Growth rate 1981-91 per cent</i>
7	Ahmedabad	Ahmedabad	Gujarat	3.31	28.9
8	Pune	Pune	Maharashtra	2.49	47.4
9	Kanpur	Kanpur Nagar	Uttar Pradesh	2.03	28.8
10	Lucknow	Lucknow	Uttar Pradesh	1.67	63.0
11	Nagpur	Nagpur	Maharashtra	1.66	36.2
12	Surat	Surat	Gujarat	1.52	64.2
13	Jaipur	Jaipur	Rajasthan	1.52	49.2
14	Kochi	Ernakulam	Kerala	1.14	38.1
15	Vadodara	Vadodara	Gujarat	1.13	42.5
16	Indore	Indore	Madhya Pradesh	1.11	33.1
17	Coimbatore	Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu	1.10	23.4
18	Patna	Patna	Bihar	1.10	19.6
19	Madurai	Madurai	Tamil Nadu	1.09	20.5
20	Bhopal	Bhopal	Madhya Pradesh	1.06	58.5
21	Visakhapatnam	Visakhapatnam	Andhra Pradesh	1.06	74.3
22	Ludhiana	Ludhiana	Punjab	1.04	66.7
23	Varanasi	Varanasi	Uttar Pradesh	1.03	28.8

Source: Same as in Table 3.2.

The strained infrastructure of most cities and towns in India has given rise to serious problems of water shortage, energy crisis, growing environmental degradation, health, proliferation of slums — along with the usual negative aspects of urbanization all over the world. Growing urbanization has become a major population issue which involves both a natural increase in population (i.e. births minus deaths) and migration from rural areas (mainly because of the slow progress of rural development). Policies and programmes in the arena of regulation of both migration and natural increase must succeed, if things have to improve on the urban front.

Let us now assess the current demographic situation. On the basis of the latest official data from the office of the Registrar General, we have classified the states and UTs according to the Birth Rate (very high, high, moderate and low) in Table 4.1. We also give the data for the Death Rate and Infant Mortality Rate (number of deaths within one year of birth per one thousand live births).

Table 4.1. Birth, Death and Infant Mortality Rates, 1995

States/UTs	Birth rate	Death rate	IMR
<i>A. Very High Birth Rate (over 30)</i>			
Uttar Pradesh	34.8	10.3	86
Rajasthan	33.3	9.1	86
Madhya Pradesh	33.2	11.2	99
Bihar	32.1	10.5	73
<i>B. High Birth Rate (25-30)</i>			
Haryana	29.9	8.1	69
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	29.7	8.2	78
Assam	29.3	9.6	77
Meghalaya	29.0	8.9	45
Orissa	27.8	10.8	103
Gujarat	26.7	7.6	62
Lakshadweep	25.5	7.6	36
Himachal Pradesh	25.2	8.7	63
<i>C. Moderate Birth Rate (21-25)</i>			
Punjab	24.6	7.3	54
Maharashtra	24.5	7.5	55
Andhra Pradesh	24.2	8.4	67
Karnataka	24.1	7.6	62
Arunachal Pradesh	23.8	6	61
West Bengal	23.6	7.9	58
Delhi	23.3	6	39
Sikkim	22.5	6.9	47
Daman & Diu	21.8	8	36
<i>D. Low Birth Rate (below 21)</i>			
Kerala	18	6	15
Tamil Nadu	20.3	8	54
Goa	14.7	7.5	13
Manipur	20.6	6.7	27
Tripura	18.9	7.7	45
Pondicherry	20.1	7.6	25
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	18.7	5.8	6
Chandigarh	19.5	5.7	44
Nagaland (1994)	20.4	4.3	32

Source: Registrar General, India, *Sample Registration System (SRS)*, estimates for 1995.

The all-India figures for 1995 are as follows: Birth Rate 28.7, Death Rate 9.3, Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) 74. It will be seen from Table 4.1 that in the large states of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, the birth rates are the highest, the death rates are also the highest (except in Rajasthan) and the Infant Mortality Rate is also the highest compared to other states except Orissa (where the Infant Mortality Rate is highest in India).

It follows that the crux of the population problem in India lies in the states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh (put in alphabetical order — our acronym is BIMARU states) which account for 40 per cent of India's population, 42 per cent of the growth rate and 48 per cent of the total *illiterate* population of India. One should also realize that unless the overall death rate and in particular the child and infant mortality rates are substantially brought down in the large states, the family planning programme will fail to curb the national growth rate significantly.

One of our major failures has been on the literacy front. High fertility is the price we are paying for high illiteracy. Empowerment of women is rendered difficult by the high level of illiteracy among women. The sad state of affairs is brought to light by Table 4.2.

TABLE 4.2: LITERACY RATES BY SEX, 1991 (PER CENT)
(ARRANGED IN ORDER OF LITERACY RATE)

<i>India/States/UTs</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
<i>India</i>	52.2	64.1	39.3
Kerala	89.8	93.6	86.2
Mizoram	82.3	85.6	78.6
Goa	75.5	83.6	67.1
Maharashtra	64.9	76.6	52.3
Himachal Pradesh	63.9	75.4	52.1
Tamil Nadu	62.7	73.8	51.3
Nagaland	61.7	67.6	54.8
Gujarat	61.3	73.1	48.6
Tripura	60.4	70.6	49.7
Manipur	59.9	71.6	47.6
Punjab	58.5	65.7	50.4
West Bengal	57.7	67.8	46.6
Sikkim	56.9	65.7	46.7
Karnataka	56.0	67.3	44.3

Table 4.2 (cont.)

<i>India/States/UTs</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
Haryana	55.9	69.1	40.5
Assam	52.9	61.9	43.0
Meghalaya	49.1	53.1	44.9
Orissa	49.1	63.1	34.7
Madhya Pradesh	44.2	58.4	28.9
Andhra Pradesh	44.1	55.1	32.7
Uttar Pradesh	41.6	55.7	25.3
Arunachal Pradesh	41.6	51.5	29.7
Rajasthan	38.6	55.0	20.4
Bihar	38.5	52.5	22.9
<i>Union Territories</i>			
Lakshadweep	81.8	90.2	72.9
Chandigarh	77.8	82.0	72.3
Delhi	75.3	82.0	67.0
Pondicherry	74.7	83.7	65.6
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	73.0	79.0	65.5
Daman & Diu	71.2	82.7	59.4
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	40.7	53.6	27.0

Source: Same as in Table 3.2.

A disturbing feature of the emerging demographic scene in India is what we call the 'North-South Demographic Divide', where the North stands for Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan and the South stands for Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka (in order of their success in achieving the demographic transition). By way of example, we present Table 5.1 based on NFHS data which gives a set of demographic indicators bringing out the contrast between North and South. It will be seen that in Madhya Pradesh, 65.7 per cent of the females (6+) were *illiterate* compared to 17.6 per cent in Kerala. In Rajasthan 40.6 per cent of the girls (in the age group 6-14) were attending school, compared to 94.8 per cent in Kerala. In Bihar, only 23 per cent of the women in the reproductive age groups were using contraception compared to 63 per cent in Kerala.

The NFHS collected interesting data on exposure to family planning messages on radio and television and also the extent to which both husbands and wives approve of family planning. In Bihar only 26.6 per cent of the respondents heard family planning messages on radio or television compared to 66.8 per cent in Karnataka. In Uttar Pradesh only 42.3 per cent of the respondents (husband and wife) approve of family planning compared to

TABLE 5.1: DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS (NFHS, 1992-93)

	Percent of illiterate females (age 6+)	Percent of girls attend- ing school (age 6-14)	Birth rate (per 1,000)	Total fertility rate (per woman)	Percent of women using con- traception
India	56.7	58.9	28.7	3.1	10.6
Bihar	71.4	38.3	32.1	4.0	23.1
Madhya Pradesh	65.7	54.8	31.6	3.9	36.5
Rajasthan	74.6	40.6	27.0	3.6	31.8
Uttar Pradesh	68.5	48.2	35.9	4.8	19.8
Kerala	17.6	94.8	19.6	2.0	63.3
Tamil Nadu	43.9	78.7	23.5	2.5	49.8
Andhra Pradesh	61.5	54.8	24.2	2.6	47.0
Karnataka	53.5	64.4	25.9	2.9	49.1

Source: IIPS, National Family Health Survey, 1992-93, India, Bombay, 1995

TABLE 5.2: EXPOSURE OF FAMILY PLANNING MESSAGES (NFHS 1992-93)

States	Heard FP message on radio/TV	Both husband and wife approve of FP
India	42.2	58.4
Andhra Pradesh	58.4	77.1
Tamil Nadu	51.9	63.7
Karnataka	66.8	63.2
Kerala	55.9	62.6
Bihar	26.6	46.0
Madhya Pradesh	34.3	50.3
Rajasthan	33.3	59.1
Uttar Pradesh	32.7	42.3

Source: Same as in Table 5.1.

77.1 per cent in Andhra Pradesh. It may be mentioned in passing that Andhra Pradesh is catching up with Tamil Nadu and Kerala in the path of a successful demographic transition.

After the United Nations sponsored International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD, Cairo, 1994), the focus all over the world is on *reproductive health* (which includes family planning). It may be recalled

that in the first Five Year Plan of India (1951-56), family planning was a part of general health care and this and subsequent plans have recognised the need for improving maternal and child health. To us in India, reproductive health is old wine in new bottle. It is also worth noting that under the misguided advice of foreign experts, family planning has been put in a separate basket ever since 1960. This has harmed the family planning programme in which certain government functionaries tend to neglect health and are more eager to fulfil family planning targets mechanically. In view of the mounting criticism of the target approach and in light of the recommendations of the target free approach by the ICPD, the Government of India announced a new policy to make the family welfare programme target free from 1 April 1996. The success of this policy will depend on the extent to which the mind sets of bureaucrats and people change.

Table 6 based on NFHS data brings out the sharp contrast between North and South in regard to maternal health care and the delivery system. This table gives a clue to the better performance of family planning programmes in the southern states.

Table 6. MATERNAL HEALTH (NFHS 1992-93)

	<i>Received antenatal care</i>	<i>Received two doses of tetanus toxoid vaccine</i>	<i>Received iron/folic acid tablets</i>	<i>Births delivered in medical institutions</i>	<i>Deliveries assisted by health professionals</i>
<i>All India</i>	60.0	53.9	50.5	25.5	34.3
<i>North</i>	42.4	35.9	30.2	12.4	20.5
Bihar	36.3	30.7	21.4	12.1	18.9
Madhya Pradesh	52.3	42.8	44.3	15.9	30.0
Rajasthan	30.7	28.3	29.2	11.6	21.8
Uttar Pradesh	44.4	37.4	29.5	11.2	17.2
<i>South</i>	89.0	79.7	79.9	49.2	61.0
Andhra Pradesh	85.9	74.8	76.4	32.9	49.3
Karnataka	83.4	69.8	74.9	37.5	50.9
Kerala	97.3	89.8	91.2	87.8	89.7
Tamil Nadu	94.2	90.1	84.1	63.5	71.2

Source: Govindasamy Pavalavalli and B.M. Ramesh, *Maternal Education and the Utilization of Maternal and Child Health Services in India (NFHS Subject Reports, Number 5)*, IIPS, Bombay, 1997.

SUCCESS STORIES: KERALA AND TAMIL NADU

Kerala is a shining success story in India's quest for population stabilization. It has received considerable international attention and its demographic transition has been fairly well documented. It is worth noting that the state's birth, death and infant mortality rates are lower than China's and the literacy rate is higher than China's. All this was achieved in a democratic polity without any coercive measures. A large number of factors have contributed to the Kerala Model of demographic transition. It would be simplistic if we give credit to the family planning programme alone and ignore long-term historical developments. In fact, Kerala's demographic transition has been crafted by history and geography which may not be replicable in other states of India. We present below in a summary form the main factors which led to success in Kerala:

Maharajas: The benevolent rulers of Travancore and Cochin had an enlightened policy toward health and education. It has become fashionable these days to compute a Human Development Index. Interestingly, the human resource development strategy was initiated in Kerala long back and no wonder, among all the states today, Kerala has the highest rating in the Human Development Index.

Missionaries: Christian missionaries played a pioneering role in promoting health and education. They run excellent hospitals, schools and colleges.

Mass Movements: There were several mass movements in Kerala led by social reformers and visionaries who electrified the masses and empowered them to fight for their rights. This developed a high degree of political consciousness.

Marxist Governments: The first elected Marxist government in India was in Kerala. It introduced and implemented land reforms effectively. When landowners lost land they realized that land could no longer sustain them and they turned to education in a big way as an alternative source of income. The beneficiaries of land reform also realized that they could not make a proper living from the small parcels of land they had received. They also turned to education. Thus land reforms created an environment of education which yielded a long-term dividend to Kerala.

Massive Investment: Health and education policies by successive state governments in Kerala, which combined with good administration, helped in human resource development, better health standards, and the adoption of the small family norm.

Mega Villages: High density, marginal differences between rural and urban areas, coupled with a good transportation network (by road and water) made access to health and education easy. The rural-urban continuum is a unique feature of Kerala's human settlement pattern.

Maternal health. The maternal system, though confined to women, higher status did raise the status of women as a whole in Kerala.

Marriage. The continuous increase in the marriage age of girls made a dent in the birth rate. This in turn was the influence of education. Late marriages and educated mothers meant lower rates of maternal, infant and child mortality and a greater practice of contraception.

Migration. Historically, Kerala was always exposed to migration. After the oil crisis in the 1970s, there was a sudden spurt in emigration to the Gulf countries. Apart from easing population pressure and unemployment, such migration meant considerable monetary remittances to the family in Kerala. This increased the per capita real income of the people, which is not always reflected in the national income statistics.

Media. Both the print and electronic media, along with movies helped in effective communication, including the spreading of family planning messages and the advocacy of the small family norm.

Management. The family planning programme was well managed in Kerala. In fact, the Ernakulam camp experiment of mass-scale male sterilization was a pioneering and innovative family planning programme. Apart from the government in Kerala, private doctors and hospitals play a significant role in the health sector.

After Kerala, Tamil Nadu also reached replacement levels of fertility and has completed its demographic transition. The factors which have contributed to Tamil Nadu's success are somewhat different: the level of education in the state is lower than in Kerala and the marriage age and death and infant mortality rates are higher. Tamil Nadu is also a much larger state than Kerala in terms of area and population. Space does not permit us to go into the details of the Tamil Nadu Model except to point out that a motivated government, a high degree of political will, the impact of the mid-day meal programme launched by Chief Minister M G. Ramachandran (MGR) and the total involvement of the bureaucracy were largely responsible for Tamil Nadu's success. The impact of social reformers like Periyar (Ramaswamy Naicker) was also considerable. Of late, Andhra Pradesh is also doing well on the family planning front. In short, South Indian states bring hope to India's family planning programme and consequently the prospects of population stabilization. If the large states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan evolve their own models successfully, India will ride over the explosive phase of population growth in the next two decades or so. It is, however, certain that India will emerge as a *billion-plus country* by the year 2001. If we lag behind in running an efficient family planning programme in the wider context of social transformation and empowerment of women, the chances of rapidly curbing the population growth rate will be none too

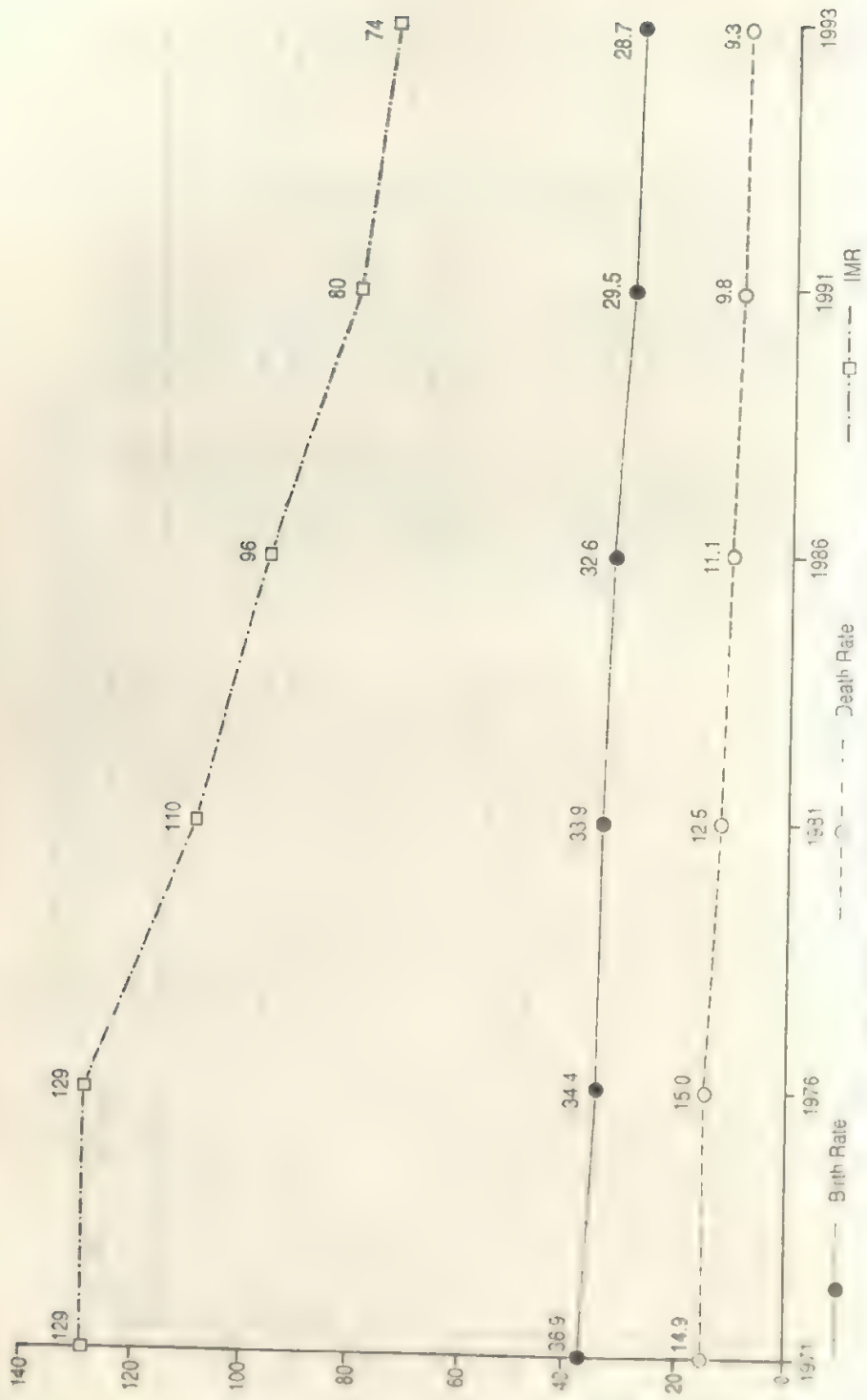
bright. India may catch up with China in terms of *population size* in another three or four decades. This certainly will not call for rejoicing.

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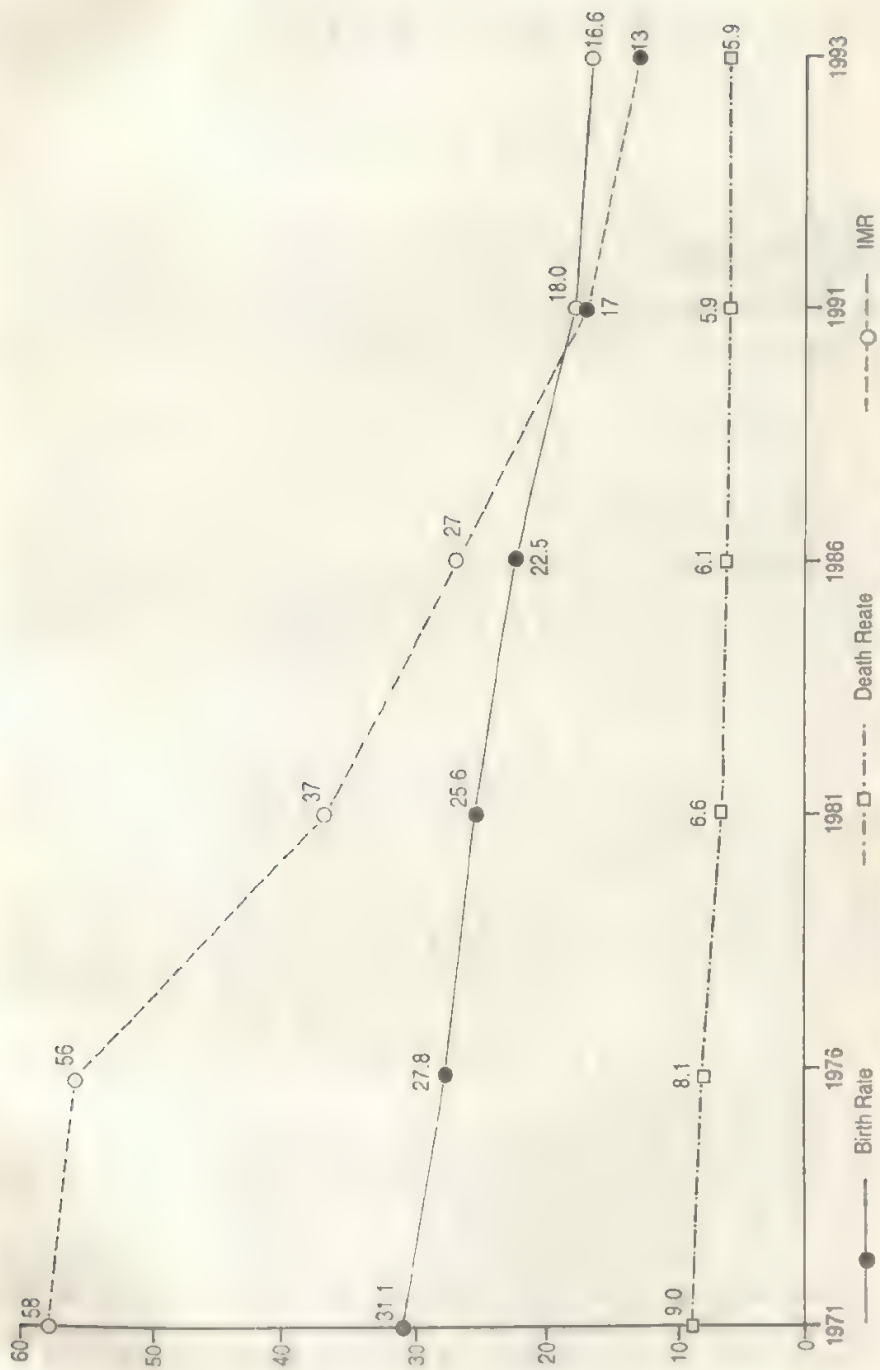
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Birth, Death and Infant Mortality Rates in India, 1971-93



Birth, Death and Infant Mortality Rates in Kerala, 1971-93



Birth, Death and Infant Mortality Rates in Uttar Pradesh, 1975-93

RAHUL RAM

Oh! To Be in India

Sixth February 1993: I am sitting in the lock-up of the Sorwa Police Station (Jhabua District, Madhya Pradesh). Sorwa P.S. was once the home of the rebel chief Chitu Bhil and it was captured by the British some time in the 1880s, after they had killed him. I am happy to be here and am singing a song I learnt just three days ago:

Chitu, the sarkar has stolen your bungalow, how can you just stand and watch.

The cops love the singing and we are given a lovely hot dinner straight from the thanedar's house.

Three days later we are singing the same song sitting in the Alirajpur Tehsil Jail, now joined by sixty other inmates, and the jail staff look on approvingly. They don't mind the singing, but they hate it if we raise slogans.

So there we were, taking part in a satyagraha, inspired by Gandhian ideals of non-violent struggle. We too were locked in a battle with the state, and though Independence had come to India decades ago, there had to be constant effort to maintain the spirit of that Independence.

These are not things one thinks about while growing up. In school, the state-sponsored deification of Gandhiji turned that amazing personality into a somewhat boring and quite irrelevant person. We were born and brought up in independent India and never questioned how we got there. There was no reason to question, for the history books laid it out in cut and dried fashion: names (Gandhi, Nehru, Patel and so on), places (Dandi, Jallianwala Bagh, Chauri-Chaura) and dates (1919, 1930, 1942, 1947) and you just had to memorize these reasonably well in order to pass examinations. Fifteenth August was a holiday meant for flying kites and 26 January meant a parade with tanks and soldiers (I'll bet most adult Indians can't explain exactly what 'Republic' means anyway!)

My resident sociologist Amita (who also happens to be my spouse) points out that my experience about what it means to be young in India today cannot be generalized since I'm well educated, reasonably well-off and urban. **So be it, and you have been warned.**

It was not until I entered my late teens that I acquired any degree of political awareness. This was directly the result of a month spent in the Garhwal Himalayas with Shri Sunderlal Bahuguna and the Chipko movement in 1980. (I was too young to register the Emergency period, but I've

since found that it had a profound influence on the lives of several people just a few years senior.) Here we learnt about the Forest Department and of corruption, about pine plantations and the timber industry as opposed to oak-rhododendron forests and local livelihoods, about the sheer hard work to survive, of the strength of collective action and the insidiousness of village-level caste politics. Because of this experience, environmental concern of the urban 'save the forests' variety became drastically modified into an understanding of the political economy of environment. Learnt, too, how all the men were off working in the plains, leaving the women and the youth to carry on the struggle.

This experience led some of us to form a students' environmental group called Kalpavriksh, which has formed the basis of thinking and acting on environmental issues ever since. During my college years, due to a request from the Pesticide Action Network, Malaysia, we studied pesticide use in India and found that 'economic considerations' justify India exporting DDT to other Asian countries while the country's leaders talked about saving the environment. I found that the much-touted Green Revolution raised questions about sustainability, national food security, poverty and access to food, regional inequality, and that they're all linked to environmental outcomes. Learnt that the government sells bamboo at Rs 2 per tonne to paper factories and prevents tribals from cutting bamboo in their forests. I found that the laws the British enacted as our rulers are even more zealously followed by the bureaucrats of 'Independent' India. All this happened during college days and I was lucky to benefit from lots of impassioned talk with many inspired and inspiring people. I was also extremely lucky to have wonderful parents who didn't push me towards the doctor/engineer career path that all middle-class families seemed to desire for their sons in those days. (This last seems to have changed now and everybody wants to do management.)

But careers have to be made and I spent two years in IIT getting my Masters in Chemistry surrounded by people whose only idea was to go to the USA. I followed suit and duly found myself at Cornell University in 1986. Boy, was I glad I went!

FOUR GLORIOUS YEARS

I spent a glorious four years at Cornell and learnt all about personal hard work and the joys of doing research, about hard-core academia, an admirable work culture and non-corrupt administration. But most of all, I learnt that I had absolutely no desire to stay in the USA, as so many of my Indian friends seem to inexplicably want to do. It's a nice enough place, the natives are friendly and one can rapidly acquire the toys of modern living such as a car, TV, fridge, washing machine, stereo system, CD player, computer and so on. What you cannot get is a culture you're familiar with and comfortable in. You're the eternal outsider, playing by their rules, wary of overstepping

that various self-reported frequencies and holdings are dependent on an underlying discrete amount of what you regard as the size of them.

Given our health concerns, it is an understatement to say that we are not taking the good and the bad and the ugly with us. In our company, and in our country, because there are some 40 million in Japan and more of which I have referred to before, we are in 1990 and we are starting to spread smoking and drinking to the New World. In our industry.

The first of us goes that a year with the Alabamians means working hard. I don't mind being busy, as long as it's my life. I get to know some of the culture as well as some of the people. In my travels, I meet some of the country's most important people, artists, and leaders. I learn that hard work, determination, and a sense of community are the keys. We were all working well, we had a good time, and we were all working together – every day bringing us closer to

[illegible]

BECAUSE THEY CARED

These are the people who must tell you what it means to be young in India today. I have a Vaniya Kharin and other Adivasi men my age who stand to lose everything they have. Manish and Choralil who have become leaders instead of remaining just small farmers. Shripad, Adok, Nardini, Amar, Jayashree, Ananthulu, Siva and others who gave up comfortable homes and careers for a battle that became theirs because they cared. These people, to my mind, represent the true spirit of independent India.

Time, the urgent necessity to earn money, and probably an inability to cope with the extremely hard demands of the Andolan saw me gradually move into a full-time career in music. I had been playing since school, but in a semi-professional way. On returning to India I met a group of people who were doing very interesting, different and new music — I played with the band all through my Andolan days. Today, music is what I do almost every day, and it puts food on the table. It is extremely challenging and fulfilling at the same time. But in the process, I have been converted in today's India into the ideal target(?) tool(?) advertisement(?) for liberalization.

I am now an artist but a business man too. And the contradictions multiply. I would love it if major multinationals sponsor our group's concerts

and are being engaged broadly. I hope we should be the subject and content of discussion, debate, disagreement, policy and get support about in the manner of several successful universities, think tanks and research voluntary bodies. And yes I would probably respond 'commercial for Pepsi if asked'.

So how is your image and feeling a full, busy life, yet confounded by contradictions? What is your latest work on the professional press apparatus? *Journalism* seems to provide a more precise, critical, and people-oriented people, development professionals. Everything seems to be thrown wide open. And yet the prevailing atmosphere is largely cynical. Get yours and get out. Me first. If this indeed is the message of liberalization, it would be heard loud and clear. Everyone senses opportunities, actually knows the road to go and then. And here I wish my image would be made so very much less than they have led me to the Hindu idea of *hastaghar* — where they love it best?

And where does that leave the 'humanist' ideals and leftist thinking and the fervour through which India gained her independence? Every time I meet someone I think this contradicts the theme is well done, struggling against and through. Internal and external. But in my daily life a sense of the machine — your *hastaghar* is a word of confusion. Most of my friends would laugh at such questions or even be slightly embarrassed at such queries.

But through all this there's a part of me that senses that — I could not be writing this piece if I belonged to some part of the Third World. They are probably not at the same important stage I have in the US. My friends from around the world in Asia, Europe and Latin America indeed give me a sense of perspective that I lack there in comparison. There would be no *Narayan*. And they, there, even the government would at best put a dam to water into submission. They will say no to it here, but it's just that day. No local press would carry the news, not if they wanted to carry on being the local press. And so, yes, it's challenging and exciting to be in India today and that is where I want to be, contradictions and all.

A.M. KHUSRO

India: A Dialectic of Opposites

A person whose wisdom has been widely acknowledged, once remarked: 'Whatever statement you make about India, the opposite of it is also true'. This statement seems to run through nearly every aspect of Indian polity, economy and society. To illustrate briefly and to substantiate it later, we notice that:

- Indian democracy has survived and gained in strength during the last fifty years but India continues to have a weak democracy.
- India is a soft and tolerant society which is good material for democracy, but India's parliamentary institutions and, following their example, other institutions, organizations and individuals, are becoming specimens of intolerance.
- India has developed a strong feeling of nationalism over a century and particularly in the last fifty years, but it looks as though it will take some time before it attains maturity, overcomes fragmenting sentiments at the peripheries and expresses itself through firmly rooted institutions.
- India — the world's most complex society with an amazing diversity of races, regions, religions, denominations, languages and cultures — has developed into a unified, federal and secular state but it is also true that this secularism remains as much *de jure* as it is *de facto*.
- India has cultural affinity but tense relations with its neighbours — though things have improved markedly in recent years.
- India is an agricultural country but it is also an industrialized and industrializing nation.
- India has taken major strides in the conquest of poverty and has uplifted in the last fifty years a population larger than Europe's, from below the poverty line to above it; but it is also true that the country has still about one-third of its 950 million people below the poverty line.
- India has taken tremendous strides in literacy, education, health, income and calorie consumption of its people and has greatly increased their life expectancy in fifty years — by no means a small achievement — but the country still has widespread illiteracy, poor education, ill health, low per capita income and low consumption.

This list can go on indefinitely, demonstrating all the time the plus

country, compared with the political factors, that we can make out. It becomes clear that the country has been experiencing drastic but steadily increasing population and that there will be nothing on a higher level of living, better standards of performance and increased standards of efficiency, as is not the thoughtless to suppose that when a given society, consisting of one-sixth of the world's population, begins to move from the border of underdevelopment to a condition of progress, from a condition of inefficiency, and from a total lack of confidence to high levels of performance, it is not necessary to work steadily on through these periods of misgovernment or in a short period of prosperity, efficiency, and confidence to emerge in a new period and group, which become wider and deeper and multiply further into an effective society of the whole country and society become prosperous, efficient and confident — but not all at once. This is the case with India.

SOCIO-POLITICAL FACTORS

Any reflection on India's progress or the lack of it must begin with the realization that India is perhaps the world's most complex and diversified society. From about 2500 B.C. to about A.D. 1000, all the major races of the world either lived in or shifted to India. The Dravidian race, enriched by prehistoric Negroid migrations from Africa, kept moving northwards, the Mongoloid races from East Asia crossed the Burmese mountains and settled in north-eastern India, the Aryan race, moving from Central Asia, settled in various parts of north India and pushed southwards, and the Semitic races started arriving around A.D. 1000 and occupied various parts of the sub-continent.

Thus India came to have nearly all the major races of the world in its fold. Each race brought its own culture, philosophy, religion, language and practices. With all that enormous diversity, it looked as though India would be a country of phenomenal inter-racial, inter-cultural, inter-religious and inter-linguistic conflicts and bloodshed. However, from early on in history, leaders arose in diverse areas of Indian life whose efforts led to the development of ways and means of tolerance and mutual accommodation, though not integration. In fact, all major figures of early Indian history — be it Buddha, Ashoka, Akbar, the Sufi saints, the *Bhakti* people or, in our own days, Gandhi — were practitioners and advocates of tolerance and mutual accommodation. Under their far-reaching influence over the centuries, India became a soft and tolerant society and, perhaps, remains so even today, despite some indications to the contrary. Mahatma Gandhi and his close followers like Jawaharlal Nehru understood the tolerant nature of India's past and adopted democracy as a political philosophy, as democracy itself is a matrix of tolerance and is in keeping with the subcontinent's psyche.

India has made considerable progress in establishing a parliamentary democracy characterized by the rule of law and a working separation of powers between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary. On the whole, despite many flaws and aberrations, political institutions are coming stronger. The Central government has undergone many vicissitudes and changes. Each change, however, though accomplished in a different way, has been within the fold of democratic practices. This growth of parliamentary institutions — Parliament at the Centre and Legislative Assemblies at the State levels — has influenced the adoption of democratic methods in other national, regional and state institutions and organs of local governments.

THE THREAD OF INTOLERANCE

One negative factor which still runs like a thread through Indian political institutions is the prevalence of intolerance. There have been talented and articulate parliamentarians since Nehru's days but debates in Parliament and State Assemblies are often marked by ran-out and bitterness. Different political parties organize walk-outs on various pretexts or rush to the well of the House to surround the Speaker to get a favourable decision, and on occasion, even have fist fights. A cartoon by Laxman, one of India's outstanding cartoonists, in *The Times of India* sometime ago depicted a new member of Parliament asking a liveried and turbaned door-keeper in Parliament: 'Where is the well of the House? I am a new member, you see, and I am supposed to rush to it.'

Intolerance does not augur well for the future of parliamentary democracy in India. The essence of the latter is not so much a system of voting by ballot as tolerance of the opposition. This essential condition is not always fulfilled in Indian parliamentary institutions though much progress has been made in this regard in the last half a century.

To succeed, democracy requires a spirit of scientific empiricism whose essence is an attitude of tentativeness. One pursuing the scientific approach questions everything that can be questioned and holds one's opinion with a semblance of doubt about one's own position, just in case it is wrong. The scientific approach always allows for the possibility that the other opinion may be right and, therefore, does not suppress it. A scientist worth his name is always ready to allow a theoretical development or an experimental arrangement which may disprove his own theory and opinion. And when it is proved wrong, he is willing to accept the other view. When this scientific approach is applied to politics, one gets democracy which too is a system of holding beliefs tentatively. While holding one's own political views to be right, one allows the opposition to sit in the House and criticize one just in case they are in the right. Such an attitude has not yet fully sunk into India's democratic psyche although a lot of distance has been covered.

With a multiplicity of religious and linguistic groups, India had at the start, under British and Portuguese governments, the shape of a mosaic state which is usually regarded as incompatible with democratic theories that are only possible in unitary states. People could believe that better and more orderly to follow their religious or linguistic line and live in — and as would be seen — One, homogeneity could be the dominant at the time that there have been communal riots and major violence like the anti-Bible riots in Delhi, anti-Muslim riots in Bombay and the destruction of the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya, which have shocked the national psyche. Communal, regional and caste differences however, need to be seen in the context of a population of 400 million spread over a subcontinental area. Box for their incidence is perceptible in the decline, starting by all the national elections which India had a general election in the last fifty years, never had a bigoted or religious political party, even if it was more than the twenty per cent share of the population that the bulk of the electorate of the vote-bank can be said to remain a unit. On the whole, it must be said that religious to crank prevails but participation by the part of those in power is still in evidence, so much so that there is a strong presumption that secularism in India may be *de jure* but not *de facto*.

NATIONALISM

There is clear evidence that starting from being a fragmented polity, the Indian state has now become a strong nationalistic entity which cuts across regional, linguistic and religious barriers and has begun to dissolve the fragments into a uniting whole. In the north, east, west and the south, most people are ready to make sacrifices for national causes and are not willing to support splinter groups and parties which may be out to destroy the national unity. The strongest evidence of a firm and growing nationalism is that when a separatist movement emerges in a given state and rises to a high pitch, the remaining states oppose it. The latter finally fails to separate and falls in line with the national sentiment. I have a theory that six to seven years stand between the start of a separatist movement and its final self-dissolution.

In the erstwhile Soviet Union, for instance, the problem of nationalities was acute in the beginning. The Communist state tried both accommodation and repression to subsume or crush the nationalities within the state. However, as time showed later, the problem of nationalities was only papered over and a Gorbachev had only to announce that the various states in the Soviet Union could claim their independence as full-fledged nations, and every state moved out of the Soviet Federation. Not so in India. Here, whether in Tamil Nadu or Punjab or Kashmir or in a Telengana or in Assam, all separatist movements are eventually contained and generally collapse in six to seven years leaving the country

united and, perhaps further strengthened. It is clear that over the last fifty years India has developed a strong national identity which will evolve further and even more strongly.

REGIONAL PARTIES

Gradually over the years the monolithic Congress Party and the erstwhile Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have had to give way to a multiplicity of regional parties. Some people see the phenomenon as a sign of decline of national sentiments. But actually, the fortunes of a political party or of some parties should not be identified with the fortunes of a nation. India, which was once described by J.K. Galbraith as a functioning anarchy, is undergoing new experiences and learning its lessons in the operation of coalition governments. It is quite astonishing how a coalition of twelve or thirteen parties, some offering support from outside, can actually hold together in office. The present one may or may not survive, but if this one does not, the next one will. It should be noticed that it is these coalition governments that have launched and sustained effectively some of the most laudable budgetary and fiscal policies. It seems that the Indian political genius is on the way to working out some sustainable solutions.

GOOD NEIGHBOURLINESS

Parts of India, the largest country in the Indian subcontinent, have identical cultures with contiguous parts of neighbouring states — West Bengal with Bangladesh, Indian Punjab with Pakistani Punjab, the north-eastern states with Nepal and Myanmar (Burma), and Tamil Nadu with Sri Lanka. None of these neighbours, however, has any cultural affinity with the others. Also, while India has a boundary with all other neighbours in South Asia, almost none of the neighbours has a boundary with any of the others. India's borders with its neighbours have been uneasy because of all kinds of political and economic problems in particular with Pakistan; an absurd situation of mutual hostility has existed for the past fifty years. Between the areas which are now India and Pakistan, there was a huge internal trade before 1947. After Independence and Partition, this domestic trade became international trade and came to a virtual halt. It dwindled to almost nothing, say Rs 100 crore or a billion rupees, which is what a single business house may be able to export of a single commodity. Economic theory tells us that there are overall gains from trade but hardly any overall losses. It is difficult to establish how many billions or trillions of dollars the two countries have lost by not trading with each other for fifty years. It is, therefore, most encouraging that the old adversaries are now sitting and talking together on matters of trade, tariffs and non-tariff barriers under the umbrella of the South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) and the South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA) and are in the process of

ending, were achieved together with the other countries of South Asia. It is possible that in the early part of the century, a few more years might be needed to bring rice and other food to a somewhat stage to have improved soil would require a similar expenditure of money and more foreign exchange of the post-independence situation. It would not follow the share of India and Japan. Also, it is worth noting which came the results of the immediate rise level of one per cent and four per cent respectively.

Industrial before made a number of bold and imaginative decisions to organize India's economy by launching a succession of Five Year Plans of economic development starting from 1951. The underlying aims were:

- raising the growth rate of the national product from about one per cent to five per cent per annum;
- raising the rate of domestic saving and investment to well above 10 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) prevailing at that time and seek some addition of foreign aid achieving a diversified pattern of investment to achieve a five per cent growth rate per annum;
- generating a large volume of employment to overcome the backlog of unemployment and to create new job opportunities and
- redistributing the national product in favour of the poor and the underprivileged and running various programmes for the conquest of poverty.

There were some other objectives as well, such as improvement in exports and the balance of payments, import substitution to produce at home items which were previously imported or could be imported, containing the price-rise to help the poor in particular, and controlling the foreign exchange value of the rupee.

The grand design or the strategy to achieve all this through planning consisted of the following:

- (a) setting up a Planning Commission to decide on investment flows in different sectors and sub-sectors of the economy;
- (b) as the private sector was not yet ready to undertake big projects, allocating the responsibility of starting and running major infra-structural projects in power generation, irrigation, fertilizers, iron and steel, non-ferrous metals, railways, airlines and roadways, to corporations and departments in the public sector — with some **exceptions in the private sector**;
- (c) allowing the private sector to undertake numerous enterprises, producing all agricultural products, all consumer goods, a lot of capital goods and a few infrastructure goods — but doing so under a licensing system, the licensing authorities consisting of official **bureaucracy**;

- (d) operating a price-controlled regime in selected key commodities like foodgrains, edible oils, kerosene, drugs and pharmaceuticals and so on, in order to make essential commodities affordable to the low-income population running into hundreds of millions;
- (e) providing subsidies to targeted poor consumers to make essential items affordable to them and also providing subsidies to the producers to produce those essential items in quantities larger than they would have otherwise produced — all with the intention of helping the low-income categories of population;
- (f) through a strategy of import substitution, encouraging domestic producers to produce what was previously imported, and expanding the range of domestic manufactures to save foreign exchange, if not to earn it — and for the sake of such encouragement, imposing relatively high tariff walls to protect the nascent domestic industry against the onslaught by well-established foreign enterprises;
- (g) maintaining the foreign exchange value of the Indian rupee *vis-à-vis* the dollar, the pound sterling, the deutsch mark and the yen, fairly rigidly fixed by the Reserve Bank of India and the Ministry of Finance, so that the revenues from exports and the payments for imports could be estimated with some certainty, along with some other alleged advantages.

This strategy worked rather well for the first fifteen to twenty years after 1951 and did result in raising India's growth rate from one per cent to three and a half per annum between 1951 and 1975 and to about five per cent per annum thereafter, with some ups and downs. Savings and investment also increased substantially from 10 per cent to more than 20 per cent in the same period. Vast capital formation took place and an impressive infrastructure was built up with 92 per cent of the funds coming from domestic resources and about eight per cent from foreign resources. However, the efficiency of capital use declined and the capital-output ratio increased in almost all lines of enterprises. This was partly due to the use of more sophisticated and capital-intensive production ventures and partly certainly due to growing inefficiency in the utilization of capital. Employment increased by the millions in each Five-Year Plan but could not match the demand for jobs which included the backlog as well as additional job requirements.

As for poverty reduction, some dent was certainly made and the poverty line, which remained at about 48 per cent of the population for many years, did begin to decline gradually and was reckoned to be as low as 31 per cent around 1994. But later correctives to this figure revealed that as much as 39 per cent of the population was below the poverty line in 1994 which means a relatively small decline from 48 per cent to 39 per cent. Even so, the absolute number of poor increased slowly while the absolute

number of non-poor began to rise sharply. If poverty were examined in its various components like literacy poverty, educational poverty, health poverty, calorie poverty and income poverty it will be seen that the number of people who shifted from the poverty zone to the non-poverty segment were running into hundreds of millions and that India had uplifted into the zone of relative comfort a population larger than that of Europe or the United States in the last fifty years. But it must be accepted that the quality of literacy, education and health has remained low and needs to be addressed in the next stage.

THE CREATION OF BLACK MONEY

One of the most startling outcomes of the semi-command or controlled economy — with a proliferation of price controls, quantity controls, rationing, quotas, foreign-exchange control, wage control, capital-issues control and capacity control — was that producers began to dodge the controlled system and sold goods and services at prices higher than the controlled prices, and in quantities larger than the controlled quantities. This production and sale above the controlled limits being illegal, could not be declared to the governmental system or tax authorities and resulted in a huge and growing accumulation of black and undeclared earnings. A key property of such illicit earnings is that they cannot be invested in institutional forms like shares and debentures in the stock exchanges nor used for paying taxes. Black money could only be kept in non-institutional forms like jewellery, land and buildings. The supply of such non-institutional assets, however, is quite limited. Gold, jewellery and land are obviously in short supply in an old country settled for centuries. The supply of buildings also falls short as the lands on which they are built, are in limited supply. The net result is that the expenditure of black money cannot augment the supply of productive assets but only increases the prices of those assets in short supply. Black money is thus a negative factor and is the enemy of capital formation, income redistribution and public welfare.

It thus seems that as time went by, the share of black earnings in the GDP kept on increasing and negatively affected genuine capital formation. Black incomes also caused inflation and maldistribution of income.

Meanwhile, another negative phenomenon emerged in Indian governmental organizations. The political and bureaucratic centres of power, privilege and patronage increased and some of them began to obtain their cuts before sanctioning a project or proposal. Black income emerged from these sources of patronage as well and began to show itself in a series of what came to be called 'scams'.

By the end of the 1990s, the growing crises of the Indian system were the result of a demand-controlled rather than a supply-augmenting set up.

The economy was subjected to numerous brakes on supplies. What to produce, how much to produce, where to produce, when to produce, how much capacity to produce and at what price to produce and sell — all these came to be controlled by a rigid bureaucracy. As the supply system virtually began to break down, around 1989 and 1990, India found itself caught in a series of crises. Basically three crises were identified: a budgetary crises of resources in the Central and State Governments, a crisis of foreign exchange and foreign capital flows, and a crisis of supplies rooted in the permit-licence system. The general phenomenon seems to be that bureaucracy and politics would first deny a licence or permit universally through a proliferation of laws, rules and procedures, and then release the brakes selectively in favour of those preferred parties which agreed to give large cuts to the licence-permit authority.

STRUCTURAL REFORMS

Faced with these crises, India had no alternative but to launch a set of major structural reforms. In 1991, a new government took over with a Finance Minister and macroeconomic manager of the calibre of Dr Manmohan Singh who launched the process of reform. Basically three sectors were reformed considerably between 1991 and 1996 and, indeed in 1997 under a different United Front regime in which P. Chidambaram was Finance Minister. The reformed sectors were: (1) the budgetary and fiscal policy sector, (2) the foreign trade, foreign investment and foreign exchange rate sector and (3) the industrial licensing sector. In the first category, all taxes came to be reduced — income tax, corporate tax, customs duties and excise duties — and budget deficits were put partly through larger revenue accruals, thanks to tax cuts, and partly through some expenditure management. As the proportion of fiscal deficits to the GDP was reduced from 8.5 per cent to six per cent and then to five per cent, the inflation rate came down sharply from 17.5 per cent in 1991 to about six per cent and even five percent in 1996. With the decline in inflation rate, the interest rate structure also began to decline and investment in the Indian economy began to grow. The benefits of liberalization were quite palpable and attracted much attention. However, these gains of fiscal policy could not be sustained and after 1994 when the budget deficits rose once again in relation to the GDP, the interest rates went up too, though the inflation rate remained somewhat contained at six per cent. It is only now that the high-interest rate structure is changing and the short as well as the long rates and the lending as well as the borrowing rates are coming down with a clear possibility of expanding.

The second part of structural reforms was that the foreign exchange value of the Indian rupee in terms of the dollar and other hard currencies, came to be fixed in the marketplace through the factors of demand and

supply and not by the bureaucracy of the Reserve Bank of India and the Ministry of Finance. This corrected the age-old overvaluation of the rupee which was an enemy of Indian exports and balance of payment equilibrium. The situation is much better now and export potential seems to be increasing very substantially. Meanwhile, the government adopted a liberal policy for foreign capital flows into the Indian economy and substantial freedoms were allowed for foreign capital to go into numerous sectors, both soft and high tech. The situation is still unfolding itself but direct foreign investment has already gone up in the last five years from \$ 300 million per annum to more than \$ 2 billion in 1996-7 not to mention a rising value of investment in Indian corporates by the foreign institutional investors (FIIs) through the Indian stock exchanges. With a prosperous economy going ahead at the highest ever growth rate of seven per cent per annum, the demand for imports is rising. But exports are rising too as:

- (1) **the rupee is no longer overvalued;**
- (2) **domestic inflation rate is low;**
- (3) **the technology content of Indian goods and services is improving;**
and
- (4) **with the end of the recession in the United States, though not yet perhaps in Western Europe, world demand for Indian goods and services is probably on the rise.**

The third dimension of reform was the elimination of licensing requirements for the expansion of Indian industry. This has been lauded by Indian industrialists who are in an expansive mood for the first time in many decades, and are getting ready to face world competition in a globalizing atmosphere.

It must be conceded, however, that numerous sectors and sub-sectors of the Indian economy other than the three major sectors mentioned above, are still crying out loudly for structural reform. Some of these sectors are the finance sector (only partly reformed), the public sector, the educational sector, the co-operative sector, the area of urban ceiling and rent control, the area of agricultural land ceilings and rents, the electric power sector and so on. It is certain that the unreformed sectors are now standing in the way of the efficiency and performance of the reformed sectors and, hence, further reform should be addressed immediately.

The next stage of the Indian economy certainly has to be to keep up with further liberalizing and decontrolling structural reforms. A long way lies ahead but as the major stumbling blocks have been removed, it is possible that travelling along the road ahead would be easier, with large benefits all round. It appears, all in all, that the journeying in the last five decades through thick woods and dark forests, the Indian polity,

economy and society have not lost their way and are now coming into open spaces and level fields, perhaps with fewer obstacles to negotiate.

Part IV

Culture

K. SATCHIDANANDAN

Literature: Signing in Different Scripts

Two seemingly antithetical yet overlapping projects characterize the literatures of independent India: modernization and democratization. By modernization I mean that radical transition of sensibility, perception and idiom which overtook most Indian literatures in the 1950s and 1960s. By democratization I mean the engagement of literatures with collective destinies reflected in content as well as the employment of popular speech and folk traditions at the level of form.

Modernism emerged under different circumstances in different languages and often meant different things, though its common thrust was anti-romantic and meant an innovation of idiom that was essential to articulate the new perception of life in the context of industrialization and urbanization. It was the revolt of a sensibility threatened by imminent decadence on the one hand and the ominous intimations of the loss of rural life on the other. The existing culture was under shock, stimulated by the retreat of Gandhian values from political life, huge, city-oriented demographic movements prompted by rural unemployment, the trauma left by Partition, the demon of hunger stalking the cities as well as the villages, the tensions bred by colonial education, the solitude and alienation experienced by the sensitive urban populace, the metaphysical anguish provoked by the new awareness of space and time, the challenge posed by the uprooted masses to the secure sense of tradition and the native ways of seeing and feeling, and the terror and ecstasy of the new world without God. The Modern Experience in India was a composite of all these elements: the experience of being caught in a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and struggle, ambiguity and anguish. Collective ideologies had lost their charm: even ideologies of resistance seemed to have been absorbed into formal establishments. The idea of progress was in question: the interminable complexities of experience compelled writers to seek alternative styles of thought, image and expression.

In the first half of the twentieth century, a series of successive overlapping movements had appeared at the national level that prepared the ground for the mixture of schools and styles we find in contemporary Indian literature. The nationalist phase of our literature from the late nineteenth century to about the thirties of the twentieth century produced poetry that glorified the heroic past of India and roused people to fight colonial aggression as well as feudal oppression — both of class and gender — and fiction that reflected the tensions of the renaissance. A public sphere had come up in all the major

formal resources of the prevailing modes. Patricide was a precondition to such innovation: the revolt was against lilting lyricism in poetry and conventional realism in fiction.

Modernism became a way of documenting the dehumanization of society in India after Independence with its attendant morbidity, alienation and loss of identity. There was a shattering of the gestalt as Dilip Chitre would call it. Like in European Modernism, political conservatives and radicals (Yeats and Louis MacNeice, Adiga and Muktibodh) were both accommodated by Indian Modernism too since both had grown cynical and frustrated about the authoritarian tendencies of the nascent state and economic and moral deprivation, and both were on the look-out for powerful forms of new expression. Modernism was a demand of our own history and not a command from the West as some of its detractors would argue. Western models might have been employed at times as tools of subversion; but the agenda for the new aesthetic was set by our own literary history. It initiated a dialogue between the subaltern and the hegemonic, breaking through the Progressivists' distrust of new textual strategies.

THE DEMOCRATIC TRADITION AND NEW SHOOTS

All Indian languages have a strong tradition of democratic literature whose first manifestations are found in our tribal and oral literatures, then in our epics, sangam literature of ancient Tamil, and Buddhist-Jainist literature; the anti-colonial, social-reformist literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the progressive literature which was an offshoot of it were two of the more recent phases of this process of democratization. The post-Independence era also produced great democratic fiction writers from Tarashankar Banerjee and Phanceshwar Nath Renu to Vaikom Mohammed Basheer and Gopinath Mohanty, and poets from Nazrul Islam and Subhas Mukhopodhyay to Nirala and Sri Sri. Modernism was an ambivalent movement that had both an individualist, aestheticist, 'high Modernist' stream and a radical, dialogic, national-popular, avant-gardist stream. From the 1970s onward the latter, democratic trend seems to have thrown up several new shoots. Our Eurocentric critics who equated Indian Modernism with Western Modernism would like to subsume these trends under the umbrella-term post-Modernism since chronologically they follow Modernism and at times show some stylistic and ideological traits of post-Modernism in the West. However our 'post-Modernisms', if we can call them so, are also deeply rooted in our own people's history that has entered the phase of new movements and micro-struggles centred round issues of decentralization, right to cultural difference, caste power, gender power, ecology, the new imperialism of the unipolar world under the guise of globalization, the intrusion of the market into everyday life, the consequent reduction of liberty to consumer choice, the forced standardization and industrialization of culture and valorization of

careeristic competition and the subtle authoritarianism of the State that fears autonomy and encourages corruption.

While the despair, angst, moral disillusionment, the anxiety of identity and the metaphysical discontent with the irrationality of existence characteristic of our Modernism do continue to be present in literature, new collective identities and expressions of dissent have also emerged at least since the 1970s. The most significant of them is the awakening of women who strive to subvert the phallogentric social order by re-examining patriarchal canons and literary practices, re-visioning myths, forging a counter-language and founding an alternative semiotics of the body and beyond. The first generation rebels of post-Independence women writers like Kamala Das, Krishna Sobti, Amrita Pritam, Ajeet Cour, Ashapura Devi, Mahasweta Devi, Lakshmikantamma and Nabaneeta Dev Sen have now been joined literally by hundreds of younger women writers from Sarah Joseph and Volga to Arundhati Roy in fiction and A. Jayaprabha and Gagan Gill to Meena Alexander in poetry. This sisterhood of dissenting female voices is seeking a libidinal economy and a politics of desire that can restructure the male-dominated world of violence on the basis of female instincts and principles.

The insurrectionary Dalit literature of Marathi, Gujarati and Kannada — now coming up also in Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Punjabi and other languages — that articulates the pain, indignation and fury of a most creative and imaginative segment of our people marginalized and oppressed since the time of the *smritis*, constitutes another avant-garde attempt at forging an alternative nationhood of a caste-free community. Poets from Namdeo Dhasal and Mangal Rathod to Siddalingaiah and fiction writers from Laxman Mane and Joseph Macwan to Devanur Mahadeva have created not only an alternative literature but also an alternative aesthetics that goes beyond the established theories of suggestion (*dhwani*), emotion (*rasa*) and propriety (*ouchitya*) and a new language of subversion, protest and celebration of dalit life and values culled out of everyday speech. These writers, more than anybody else in the so-called 'mainstream' literature, seem to have invented forms that resist all varieties of neo-Hindu attitudes and options. Like the young generation of women writers, the dalit writers of the new generation, are also careful to avoid ghettoization, to broaden the scope of their concerns and transcend the ideology of destructive hatred.

The literature of the Radical Left that broke away in the 1970s from solipsistic forms of Modernism as well as conservative 'Progressivism', seems to be on the wane under the pressure of the new movements that often transcend class, being organized around gender, caste, region and ethnicity. While one cannot deny the power of writers of this group from Murari Mukhopadhyay and M. Sukumaran to Birendra Chattopadhyay, Vara Vara Rao and Gaddar, the majority of the writers of the 1970s seem to have been absorbed into the mainstream and have accepted democracy as their platform for combat.

Quite a few writers in the languages have also begun to problematize the relationship between the region and the nation. Tamil literature has always had a deeply regional flavour that continues to be present even in the works of younger writers like B. Jayamohan and Subrabharati Manivan. The 'nativist' movement in Gujarati has produced highly talented fiction writers like Kanpi Patel and Himanshi Shefat while the *uttar adbhutik* movement — another village-oriented nativist trend in Bengali — has given us excellent poets like Amitabha Gupta and Anuradha Mahapatra. Poets like Attoor Ravivarma and K.G. Sankara Pillai of Kerala have been searching for a 'Dravidian' poetics through the employment of familiar rhythms, provincial archetypes, regional cultural symbols, references to local flora and fauna and historical events: a whole eco-aesthetics of racial retrospection and introspection. These writers, like the explorers of local history in fiction like M. Mukundan, Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai and Punathil Kunhabdulla, believe in multiculturalism and heteroglossia that alone can fight the atavistic retrieval of the ethnic past characteristic of revivalism, the gradual weakening of linguistic federalism and the pressures of standardization imposed by the culture market. 'Movement' writers are not necessarily the only writers: there are solitary writers too in all the languages who, unaffected by the social tempests, continue to probe the secrets of life and death.

ANGST AND EXPERIMENTATION

A trendwise/*genre*wise examination of the dominant forms — poetry, fiction and drama in particular — will reveal the major concerns of Indian literature after Independence, even though there is nothing sacrosanct about *genres* any more since the restless creative spirit always chafes at forms and keeps on transgressing their boundaries to create new forms like the novel in verse recently popularized by Vikram Seth in English and Joy Goswami in Bengali.

While Independence was greeted by several poets with celebratory Odes, quite a few considered it a false dawn: either because they felt, like Nazrul Islam of Bengal, that the *Swaraj* did not bring anything for the hungry child or because it was a flawed and fissured freedom since its gift was a divided India. Memories of the communal holocausts were still fresh in people's minds. Telugu poets like Dasarathi, Arudra and Kundurti still yearned for the sun of freedom that had not yet risen in the Hyderabad of the Nizam and the Razakars. V.K. Gokak, the Kannada poet, pleaded for reconciliation: 'As is their (my children's) vision, so is my form. What if the faces be two? One life lives in them. I am one, my children,' that is Mother India as Gokak heard her. Armando Menzes heard 'the angry gnashings' of 'monsters agape for food' in 'the wintry fold'. Umashankar Joshi, the Gujarati poet confessed, 'However much I might try/to force a chuckle on my lips/there is no real cheer/in the desert of my heart.' The deepest anguish was expressed by the poets of the Punjab and Bengal directly affected by Partition. Annada Shankar

Rajinder Singh's *Chandni Chabutra* (1953) on the 'lost' Partition experience. And the poets seem to be struggling to come to terms with Punjab's history who collect them in the past and invent new meanings of the region and recreate them in poems. 'I have played in that Punjab. I have found the experience 'death in life' or 'life in death' as he termed people who have lost a country, painting in the dust. I think the pain of the pavement of the roads beneath the porticos. I have found some there, some there. Some here, some there, some in Banisal, some in Dacca. In the Punjab the situation was even worse. Amrita Pritham attacked Wazir Shah in his poem 'Sold to the' and called Punjab's corpses entomb the lands today. Blood overflows in Chander. She exhorts Wazir Shah who has sworn to fight with those who support to destroy his Punjab. From the other side of the new border Farz Ahmad Farz wrote, 'This is not that longed for dream of the "New India" that dawn in quest of which our comrades Set out.' The feeling of sorrow and the need for a re-defined identity still haunt the Punjab. Bechari and Sach's writers invited to come to terms with a maimed nation. The crisis moved hundreds of poets from the Urdu poet Makhdoom Mohiuddin to Sonar and the Marathi poet. The trauma of Partition also was a major theme in fiction as in the stories of Krishan Chander, Rajinder Singh Bedi, Amrita Pritham, Sadat Hasan Manto, K.S. Duggal or Nanak Singh or in novels like Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* in English, Bisham Sahni's *Lama* and Yashpal's *Jhumpa Sach* in Hindi. A monumental novel like Qurrat-ulain Hyder's *Ag Ka Darya* in Urdu reveals with rare intensity and immense sweep the experience of Partition that was a murderous attack on the millennial continuum of Indian history and civilization.

The mutual recriminations, communal tensions and orgiastic demonstrations preceding and following Independence climaxed in the martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi on 30 January 1948; now came the time for prayerful introspection and novel beginnings in India's national life. The death of the Mahatma signalled the end of a great era in the nation's life that had turned the most ordinary of men and women into heroes and heroines prepared for the greatest of sacrifices. Selflessness slowly gave way to selfishness in politics; the common people victimized by the landlords, the capitalists and the bureaucrats felt estranged from the society they had created. Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh, a pioneer of *naye kavita* (new poetry) in Hindi, declared in 1953 that 'the face of the moon is crooked' and the hegemonic political formation was a 'wooden Ravan'. Kedarnath Singh spoke of the *anagat*, the one who had not yet arrived, whose wings were lost in the golden shadows and feet were trembling in the mist. A catastrophic vision like the one W.B. Yeats spoke of in 'The Second Coming' seemed to penetrate literature as the best appeared to 'lack all conviction' and the worst were 'full of passionate intensity'. Bishnu Dey, the Bengali poet, expressed his concern for the death of the village, the rude aggression on nature and the thoughtless urbanization that seemed to disturb the harmony of life: 'Why in this land is man dumb and helpless? Why are rivers, trees and hills so uncared for?

How long do we roam about carrying our tents? When does the alien set up his own house? The same feeling was echoed by N.N. Kakkad, the Malayalam poet, who compared the city evening to a made-up prostitute roaming the park in search of customers. Akhtar-ul-Iman, the Urdu poet, found in the child lost in the city's glare and stampede, a symbol of 'The Indian youth torn from his roots'. 'The Hungry Poets' of Bengal inspired by Allen Ginsberg the Beatnik poet, especially Sunil Gangopadhyay and Shakti Chattopadhyay and the digambara poets of Andhra Pradesh like Nagnamuni, Jwalamukhi and Nikhileshwar gave birth to a new poetry of anger and frustration with Dadaist and Surrealist elements in their modes of imagination.

Free verse and prose came to be increasingly used; images replaced older figures of speech; poetic imagination as well as idiom were freed from conventional habits and clichés. Annada Sankar Ray said about these changes that there was nothing foreign about them: 'We went surrealist without reading about it. Ionesco's absurd world had descended upon us.' Navakanta Barua's *Mor Aru Prithvir* (Of Mine and the Earth's), Hiren Bhattacharya's *Bibhinna Dinar Kavita* (Poems of Different Days) and Nilmani Phookan's *Surya Heno Nami Ahe Ei Nadiyedi* (The Sun is Said to Come Descending this River) in Assamese, Shakti Chattopadhyay's *Jete Pari Kintu Kena Jabo* (I Can Go, but Why Should I?) Nirendranath Chakraborti's *Ulanga Raja* (The Naked King) besides the poems of Subhas Mukhopadhyay and Sunil Gangopadhyay in Bengali, Nissim Ezekiel's *Hymns in Darkness*, Kamala Das' *Summer in Calcutta*, Keki N. Daruwala's *Crossing of Rivers*, Jayanta Mahapatra's *Relationship* and A.K. Ramanujan's *Striders* in English, G.M. Muktibodh's *Chand Ka Muh Tedha Hai* (The Moon's Face is Crooked) and Srikant Verma's *Magadh* and the poems of Agyeya, Kunwar Narain, Kedarnath Singh, Shamsheer Bahadur Singh, Raghuvir Sahay, Sarveshwar Dayal Saxena and Dhoomil in Hindi, Umashankar Joshi's *Chinna Bhinna Chum* and Suresh Joshi's *Pratyancha* besides Sitanshu Yashaschandra's *Magan* poems and the poems of Labhshankar Thaker and Ravji Patel in Gujarati, Gopalakrishna Adiga's *Bhoomigeethe*, *Bhoota* and *Koopamanduka* besides the poems of K.S. Narasimhaswami, Chandrasekhar Kambar, P. Lankesh, Nissar Ahmed, S.R. Ekkundi, G.S. Shivarudrappa, Channaveera Kanavi and Chandrasekhar Patil in Kannada, M. Govindan's *Jeevitattil Maranattil* (In Life in Death), Ayyappa Paniker's *Kavitakal* (Poems, Three Volumes), N.N. Kakkad's 1963 and the poems of Attoor Ravivarma, Madhavan Ayyappath, Kadammanitta Ramkrishnan and K. Satchidanandan in Malayalam, Dinanath Nadim's *Ba Geva Na Az* (I Will Not Sing Today) and the poems of Rahman Rahi, Amin Kamil and G.R. Santosh in Kashmiri, L. Samarendra Singh's *Khula Amagi Wuri* (The Story of a Village) Th. Ibopishak Singh's *Narak-pathal-prithvi* (Hell, the Underworld and Earth) and the poems of Sri Biren and E. Neelakanta Singh in Manipuri, the poems of B.S. Mardhekar, P.S. Rege, Vinda Karandikar, Dilip Chitre, Arun Kolatkar, Vasant Abaji Dahake, Satish Kalsekar and

Narayan Surve in Marathi, Bhanuji Rao's *Basad Eka Ratu* (Despair, A Season), Sachi Rautroy's *Kazim* series, Ramakant Rath's *Sri Radha* and the poems of Gurusprasad Mohanty, Sitakant Mahapatra, Soubhagya Kumar Misra and J.P. Das in Oriya, Harbhajan Singh's *Rukte Rishi*, Amrita Pritam's *Sunehare* (Messages) and the poems of Ravinder Ravi, Surjit Patar, J.S. Neki, Shiv Kumar, Prabhjot Kaur and Manjit Tiwana in Punjabi, Sundara Ramaswamy's *Naduminaikkal* (The Midnight Dogs) and the poems of Kaa Naa Subramanyam, Jnanakoothan, C.S. Chellappa, S. Mani, T.K. Doraiswamy, Vallikannan, T.S. Venugopal and S. Vaideeswaran in Tamil, the poems of Sri Sri, Ismail, Kondepudi Nirmala, A. Jayaprabha, Sivareddy and Gaddar in Telugu and of Akhtar Ul-Iman, Kaifi Azmi, Ali Sardar Jafri, Makhdoom Mhouddin, Khalilur Rahman Azmi, Shehryar, Amiq Hanfi and Balraj Komal in Urdu lent new directions and dimensions to Indian poetry in the last fifty years.

They have been one in their urge to experiment and to discover a new idiom to express the complexities of our predicament; but they differed in the ways they experimented and perceived the new reality. Some used the Marxist paradigm for interpreting reality; others depended on their personal vision; some used satire and invective to comment on the bitter aspects of social reality, some resorted to elegies, some spoke indirectly through ambivalent images while some used understatement and irony or spoke directly writing a sort of anti-poetry or *akavita*. There were various movements within the broad Modernist movement. Telugu alone had several groups like *digambaras*, *paigambaras*, *tirugabadus*, *chetanavartas*, *viplava rachayitala sangham*, *Kavi sena*, *dalits* and the *streemuktivadis*. Kannada had the *navodaya*, *navya* and *navyothara* movements. Hindi had its *prayogvad*, *pragativad*, *nayee kavita* and *akavita* movements. These trends can broadly be divided into a 'high-Modernist' one where the emphasis is on stylistic innovation per se and the various 'avant gardist' movements that are driven by various forms of politics — of class, caste, gender, race or language, and are critical of the very institution of literature.

UNEVEN EVOLUTION

Indian fiction too has evolved on similar lines in the wake of Independence. However, while the revolution in poetic form has been almost total in all the languages, the change in fiction — especially the novel — has been rather slow and incomplete. It may appear ironic that Indian poetry which is more deep-rooted and traditional, with a history of more than five thousand years, has been more responsive to formal innovation — without succumbing to mere imitation — than the Indian novel that has only a history of less than two centuries, provided one does not equate *kadambari* and similar older narratives with the modern novel. Again it is poetry that has more readily responded to various national calamities like the state of internal Emergency and the consequent loss of fundamental freedoms in

1975-77, the terrorism in the Punjab, the murder of the prime minister and the anti Sikh riots of 1984, the demolition of Babri Masjid and the communal violence it unleashed, the violent Naxalbari movement of the militant leftists or the regionalist and linguistic — often chauvinist and balkanizing — movements in various parts of India.

While there are novels dealing with some of these incidents and movements, Indian novelists have mostly focused on situations — social as well as psychological — presenting, analysing and contemplating them, narrating the nation as it were, most often in the realistic pattern and only rarely resorting to super-real modes. While there are any number of pulp-fiction writers in all the languages of India churning out serial novels and thrillers that often become raw material for formula-films and television soaps, there is, too, a growing tribe of serious fiction writers engaging the attention of an ever-expanding community of careful and critical readers that mass media have yet failed to tempt. True, there are regional variations in their number as well as quality: a serious novel or for that matter even good poetry, may find better reception in Marathi, Malayalam or Bengali than say in Kashmiri, Dogri, Maithili, why even Hindi, India's official language. Literary magazines, especially avant-garde journals like *Ramdhenu* in Assamese, *Krittibas* in Bengali, *Indian Writing Today*, *Vagarth*, *Chandrabhaga* and *Setu* in English, *Ezhuthu*, *Kachathathapa* and *Meetchi* in Tamil, *Gadyaparava* in Gujarati, *Gopuram*, *Sameeksha*, *Kerala Kavita* and *Jwala* in Malayalam — to cite a few examples — encouraged experiments in literature and provided the right climate for the growth of new literature. There were also various groups and fora that promoted interaction between different *genres* in literature, different languages and also between literature and other arts especially painting and sculpture that shared its avant-gardist aspirations.

The post-war Assamese novel was predominantly social and often regional, set in a rural background. *Nadai* by Dinanath Sarma, *Ajir Manuh* (Today's Man) by Hitesh Deka, *Surajmukhir Swapna* (The Dream of the Sunflower) by Syed Abdul Malik, *Ali* (Mother) by Birendrakumar Bhattacharya and *Pita-Putra* (Father and Sons) by Homen Borgohain reveal the writers' familiarity with the problems of rural life. They expose the disruptive effects of rapid urbanization on the life of the peasantry. Significant regional novels have also been written by Silbhadra and Indira Goswami. The life of the lowly has been a major theme in fiction in other languages too. Samareesh Basu's Bengali novel *Ganga* deals with the lives of fishermen and the inner conflict between old beliefs and new ideas. Mahasweta Devi is well known for her Bengali novels dealing with tribal life the most famous of which is perhaps *Ajanyer Adhikar* (Right of the Forest) where Barsa Munda, the tribal leader, asserts the tribals' claim to the ownership of the forest. Amiya Bhushan Majumdar has written novels against a background of famine and communal disturbances. Ashapurna Devi's novels like *Pratham Pratiruti* (The First Promise) focus on the fate of women in the joint family system. Narendranath

Mitra brings out the change and diversity of family life while Binod Mitra has been a ruthless critic of feudal values in the *Sugar Bitter Green*. Master White-Servant. He shows a deep awareness of history in his novels like *Beaten Men Beaten*. Exotic currents of life flow with primitive vigour in Narayan Gangopadhyay's *Gopabandhu* while Prafulla Roy has written regional novels documenting the harrowing life of the have-nots.

Mulk Raj Anand's English novels like *Coolie* and *Two Leaves and a Bud* had earlier portrayed the life of workers with deep sympathy and understanding while R. K. Narayan's *Malgudi* was many Indian villages rolled into one. Bibhuti Bhattacharya's novels like *So Many Hungers* and *He Rides a Tiger* follow Anand's path in exposing exploitation. The Gujarati novels of Shytkumar Joshi such as *Amra* and Raghuvir Chaudhuri's *Amra*, *Avanana*, *Tedagara* also show deep social concern. Phanishwar Nath Renu's Hindi novels like *Maila Anchal* (The Dirty Region) and *Parvati Parikatha* (The Tale of the Wasteland) are considered supreme examples of *anchalik* or regional novels. Amritlal Nagarkar's *Band aur Samudra* (The Drop and the Ocean), Shri Lal Shukla's *Raag Darbari*, Rahi Masoom Raza's *Adha Gaon* (Partitioned Village), and Giriraj Kishore's *Jugalbandi* and *Dhai Ghar* show a Premchand-like attention for realistic detail and a critical social consciousness. Amrit Rai, Mohan Rakesh and Rajendra Yadav have also followed the Progressives' perceptions in fiction. Krishna Sobti's novels like *Zindagi Nama* combine original perceptions with a rare freshness of style.

The *Narodaya* novels in Kannada like Shivaram Karanth's *Alida Mele* (After the Death) *Manmanagala Suliyalli* (In the Mind-Body Vortex) and *Mookajjaya Kanasugalu* (Mukaji's Visions) are unsurpassed in their civilizational, moral and social explorations. Kuvempu's regional novel, *Malegalalli Madumagalu* (The Bride of the Hills) creates a whole natural and social world at a time of cultural transformation. S. L. Bhyrappa's *Vamsavriksha*, *Grihabhanga*, *Datu* (Crossing) and *Parva* follow the Karanth tradition a little more philosophically. Chaduranga's *Sarvamangala* and *Uyyale* (The Swing), Niranjana's *Chirasmarane*, Basavaraja Kattimani's *Mannu Mattu Hennu* (Land and Women) and T. A. R. Su's *Masanada Hoovu* (Flower from a Cemetery) are some artistic examples of *Pragatishila* (Progressive) fiction in Kannada. Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai's *Kayar* (Coir), P. Kesavadev's *Ayalakkar* (Neighbours), S. K. Pottekkatt's *Oru Theruvinte Katha* (The Tale of a Street) and *Oru Desathinte Katha* (The Story of a Village), Vaikom Mohammed Basheer *Ntuppuppakkoranendarnnu* (My Grandpa had an Elephant) and *Pathummayude Adu* (Pathumma's Goat), Uroob's *Sundarikalum Sundaranmarum* (The Beautiful and the Handsome) and *Unmachu*, Lalitambika Anterjanam's *Agnisakshi* (Witnessed by Fire) and Anand's *Alkkoottam* (The Crowd) are easily the best pieces of realistic fiction in Malayalam.

Thakazhi is a great social historian among fiction writers while Basheer, Uroob and Anand lend a philosophical dimension to realistic writing. S. K. Pottekkatt is a consummate narrator while Lalitambika Anterjanam

shows a profound awareness of the sad plight of women in traditional societies. The regional novel has been enriched also by Marathi writers like S.N. Pendse (famous for his *Rathchakra* — The Chariot Wheel and *Larbali* — Reeds), G.N. Dandekar, Vyankatesh Madgulkar, Uddhav Shelke and Manohar Talhar. Oriya novels like Gopinath Mohanty's *Paraja*, Kanu Charan Mohanty's *Hu, Anna* (I, Food), *Ka* (Shadow) and *Jharia* (The Storm), Nityanand Mahapatra's *Hidamati* (The Soil of the Paddy-field), Lakshmidhar Nayak's *Mo Swapnar Sabara* (The City of My Dreams) also belong to the realistic tradition, dealing at times with the peasants and outcastes and at times with the people outside the mainstream.

Nanak Singh, the Punjabi writer, deals with the lives of widows, prostitutes, drunkards, labourers and political and social workers in his novels like *Ik Mian Do Talwaran* (One Scabbard and Two Swords) and *Gagan Damma Bajio* (The Drum Sounded in the Sky). Gurdial Singh uses regional dialect in his progressive novels like *Marhi da Diva* (The Claylamp of the Tomb) where he depicts Jagseer, a landless labourer sentenced to total isolation by the landlords. Narinderpal Singh who decries religious bigotry, Jaswant Singh Kanwal depicting life in the Malva region of the Punjab from a radical point of view, K.S. Duggal championing the cause of the oppressed, S.S. Sethi exposing the corruption of the urban elite, Amrita Pritam and Dalip Kaur Tiwana voicing the plight of women in a male-dominated society, Om Prakash Gaso fighting superstitions and evil social customs: all these writers have kept Punjabi fiction alive in our time. Tamil novels like Jayakanthan's *Sila Neramkalil Sila Manittarkal* (Certain People at Certain Moments), Sundara Ramaswamy's *Oru Puliyai Marathin Kathai* (The Tale of a Tamarind Tree), Neela Padmanabhan's *Thalaimurakal* (Generations), M.V. Venkataram's *Velvi Thee* (The Sacrificial Fire) and Akilan's *Snehithi* (Girlfriend) have a special rural flavour about them that one may find also in Telugu novels like Gopichand's *Chaduvu*, Bucchi Babu's *Chinnaraku Migileti*, R. Viswanatha Sastri's *Alpajivi* or Ranganayakamma's *Balipitham*. Ismat Chughtai wrote boldly about Muslim middle-class women in Urdu, Balwant Singh and A.N. Qasmi took up Punjabi rural themes for their Urdu fiction while Krishan Chander wrote about Kashmir, Telengana and the urban Bombay. Rajinder Singh Bedi, Sadat Hasan Manto and Muhammad Hasan Askari were progressive writers who resisted sectarian attitudes with their artistic integrity. Qurratulain Hyder has gone beyond naturalist modes of narration to bring in the deeper levels of reality. Dalit writers like Joseph Macwan in Gujarati (*Angaliyate*), Laxman Gaikwad and Laxman Mane in Marathi (*Uchalya* and *Upara* respectively) have faithfully portrayed the tormented and silenced life of the untouchables in their novels.

The genre of the historical novel has been a favourite with Indian writers of the last half-century as in the case of Devendra Acharya in Assamese (*Kalpurush*), Shyamal Gangopadhyay in Bengali (*Darashuko*), Vrindavanlal Verma (*Jhansi Ki Rani*, *Mriganayani*) and Yashpal (*Jhoota Sach*) in Hindi,

Masti Venkatesha Iyengar (*Channabharanayaka*, *Chikkavira Rajendra*), K.M. Iyer (*Shantana*), Puttaswamiah (*Kanti Kalyana*) and Rao Bahadur R.B. Kulkarni (*Ganayana*) in Kannada, Ranjeet Desai (*Swami*), and N.S. Inamdar in Marathi, Surendra Mohanty (*Nila Satia*) in Oriya, Nori Nara Simhasastri (*Rudamma Devi*), Tenneti Suri (*Genghisbkan*), Viswanatha (*Ekavira*), P. Ganapati Sastri (*Kashmira Pattamahishi*) and Bapiraju (*Gona Ganna Reddi*) in Telugu. Some of the chief practitioners of the genre have, among them, covered a long span of history from the twelfth century to the present with rare imagination and insight.

At least from the late 1950s onward Indian fiction writers have dared to experiment with the theme, technique and structure of the novel as well as of the short story. Pratulla Datta Goswami introduced the concept of the 'open novel' in Assamese, with works like *Kenca Patar Kanpani* (The Vibrations of the Green Leaves). Birendrakumar Bhattacharya's novels like *Mrityunjaya* (The Conqueror of Death), *Pratipada* (The First Lunar Day) and *Iyaringam* (People's Region) combine a deep awareness of social contradictions with a modern sense of form. *Iyaringam* which deals with the Nagas' struggle for a land of their own is particularly moving in its portrayal of the Naga life-style. Jogesh Das, Mahim Bora, Homen Borgohain, Bhabendra Nath Saikia and others have modernized the Assamese short story with their awareness of the complexity of modern life. English fiction in India has truly come of age with the novels of Amitav Ghosh, Vikram Seth, Upamanyu Chatterjee and still younger writers from Vikram Chandra to Arundhati Roy who have, at least in their sense of form, moved far ahead of the early masters like Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand and are in a sense closer to writers like G.V. Desani, the author of *All about H. Hatterr* than to, say, Anita Desai, Kamala Markandeya, Khushwant Singh or Shashi Deshpande who continue in the realistic narrative tradition. Suresh Joshi's *Chinnapatra* and *Maranottara* were the first anti-novels in Gujarati followed by the experimental fiction of Ravji Patel, Mukund Parikh, Madhu Rai, Bharat Naik and others. The 'nativists' in Gujarati like Kanji Patel and Himashi Shelat use dialects with great charm and delicacy. Agyeya's *Shekhar: Ek Jivani* heralded the new fiction in Hindi. He combined Jainendra's psychological insight with an existentialist concern for the solitary individual in this novel as well as the next, *Nadii Ke Dvipa* (Islands in the River). Nirmal Verma in his novels like *Raat Ka Reporter* (The Night Reporter) and Krishna Baldev Vaid in works like *Bimal in Bog* carried the experiment forward at both thematic and stylistic levels. *Nayi kahani* (New Story) found its best exponents in Mohan Rakesh, Nirmal Verma, Kamleshwar, Rajendra Yadav, Ramkumar Verma, Amar Kant, Mannu Bhandari, Mahip Singh, Vijayamohan Singh and others. Several prefixes like *samantar* (parallel), *sachetan* (conscious), *sahityika* (literary), *taza* (fresh), *a* (anti) and *sahaj* (natural) were used to qualify the Hindi short story between 1954 and 1960.

The classic *navya* (new) novel in Kannada is U.R. Anantha Murthy's

Samikara that takes up the questions of values from a civilizational point of view, re-examines tradition in ontological terms and in the process revolutionizes the very idea of narration through a deft use of archetypes, symbols and images and a rare poetic concentration of language. Anantha Murthy's later novels like *Bharatipura*, *Ataste* and *Bhava* along with his masterly short stories like *Sooryana Kutthirai* (The Sun's Horse), Sri Krishna Alanahally's *Kadu* (The Forest) with its picture of raging primitive passions seen through a boy's eyes, Purnachandra Tejaswi's *Svarupa* with its effective experimentation and the novels and stories of Yashwant Chittal (*Mooru Darigalu*: Three Courses Open), Shantinath Desai (*Vikshepa*), P. Lankesh, B.C. Ramachandra Sharma, Mogalli Ganesh, Vivek Shanbhag and others have enriched modern fiction in Kannada. Malayalam fiction began renewing itself with the lyrical psychoanalytic short stories of N.P. Mohammad, T. Padmanabhan, Kovilan, Madhavi Kutti (Kamala Das) and M.T. Vasudevan Nair. The debut in the 1960s of a group of highly innovative fiction writers like O.V. Vijayan (*Khasakkinte Itihasam*, The Legends of Khasak; *Dharmapuram*, The Saga of Dharmapuri; *Gurusagaram*, The Ocean of Grace; *Thalamurakal*, The Generations and so on) with his superimposition of the spiritual over the carnal, deft play with narrative time and the construction of semi-real spaces suffused with angst and black humour, M. Mukundan (*Mayyazhippuzhayude Theerangalil*, On the Banks of the Mayyazhi River; *Delhi*, *Adityanum Radhayum*, Adityan and Radha and so on) with his mythologization of history and surreal imagination, V.K.N. with his biting satires, Anand with his intellectual despair, Setu (*Pandavapuram*) with his Kafkaesque morbidity coupled with sexual passion, Paul Zacharia (*Bhaskara Pattelar and Other Stories*), M.P. Narayana Pillai and N.S. Madhavan with their perfect art of compressed narration, and several other talents transformed the fiction scene in Malayalam entirely and unrecognizably.

The tradition of the well-made novel ended in Manipuri in the 1950s; with Pacha Meitai, Kunjamohan Singh, Kh. Prakash Singh, M.K. Binodini Devi and others, the focus shifted from outer life to inner life. Stream of consciousness became an important fictional device while even apparently realistic stories pointed to the meaninglessness of the human situation before injustice that surpassed all solutions.

Marathi fiction writers like S.J. Joshi and Gangadhar Gadgil experimented with the biographical novel. Shivaji Savant in his *Mrutyunjaya* recreated Karna of Mahabharata to portray symbolically the plight of the Dalits. Jayant Dalvi's *Chakra*, M.M. Karnik's *Mahimchi Khadi* (Mahim Creek) Bhau Padhye's *Vasunaka* and Arun Sadhu's *Mumbai Dinank* (Bombay, Date) resorted to novel narrative modes to articulate the squalor, brutality and alienation of life as experienced in Bombay. Anand Yadav's *Gotavala* (An Extended Family) and R.R. Borade's *Pachola* (Fallen Leaves) expressed the tensions of industrial culture percolating to the villages. C.T. Khanolkar, Kamal Desai and Kiran Nagarkar dramatize the terrifying

power of life and man's total surrender to it with great poetic intensity. Bhisham Sahni's *Doon* was hailed as a breakthrough when it appeared in 1968 since it tried a new form and idiom. His later novels have also been written with equal care.

Surendra Mohan's *Doon Doon* (Blind Horizon) gave a new dimension to the Oriya novel in the 1960s by bringing together political invective, psychological insight and stylistic freshness. While Manoj Das, Kishori Chulan Das and Nityamani Saha tried new forms and themes in short story, Santanu Kumar Achary's *Man Half-Man* (Man Half-Man) was a symbolic novel from which he moved later on to novels with autobiographical and political overtones. *Saemantini* by Raikishore Pattanayak, Chandrasekhar Rath, Krishna Prasad Mishra and others have made further innovations in Oriya fiction. Mowmi Padmaniputhan, Ambai, Nakulan, Asokamitran, B. Jayamohan, Thoppil Mohammed Meeran, Subrabharati Manivan and others have modernized Tamil fiction by introducing the neglected aspects of life in Tamil Nadu and by making poetic use of folk and dialectal elements. *Jaduiyat*, as modernism is known in Urdu, has thrown up great talents in fiction from Qurratulain Hyder to Surendra Prakash while in Telegu Jhaso, Ravi Sastri, P. Padmaraju and others have attempted new evocative ways of writing far removed from the naturalistic narrative tradition that perhaps still dominates the language.

DRAMA IN A TIME OF TURMOIL

Drama too has passed through similar phases in independent India. Before the pioneers of modern drama — Vijay Tendulkar, Mahesh Elkunchwar, P.L. Deshpande, G.P. Deshpande, Girish Karnad, Chandrasekhar Kambar, Prasanna, H.S. Shivaprakash, Badal Sircar, C.I. Thomas, G. Sankara Pillai, Kavalam Narayana Panikar, Bhisham Sahni, Nag Bodas, Manoranjan Das, Balwant Gargi and others — made their presence felt in the theatre, Indian drama had a realistic phase when it dealt with domestic tensions after the fashion of Ibsen and Strindberg or with social tensions and conflicts in Shavian or Chekhovian modes. Indian People's Theatre Association had spearheaded the Progressive movement in drama and inspired similar efforts in several languages of India earlier dominated by mythological plays. Syed Abdul Malik (*Rajdrohi*) and Uttam Barua (*Barraja Phulesvari*) in Assamese attempted a reinterpretation of history in the light of the new social awareness. Ibsen was the major stimulant of the 1950s while Arun Sarma (*Ahar*) and Basant Saikia (*Mrgatrima*) followed the model of the absurd plays in articulating the frustrations of modern times. Badal Sircar with his plays like *Ebam* *Indrajit* introduced the idea of the third theatre in Bengal that ruthlessly dissected the middle-class society as he saw it. His plays differed from the loudly propagandist plays of Utpal Dutt. Brecht and Beckett have both been major influences on Bengali drama as can be found in the plays of Manoj

Mitra, Mohit Chattopadhyay or Sisir Kumar Das. Indian English drama has yet to create a major talent though one may recall the plays of G.V. Desani (*Hali*) or Asit Chattimbhoy (*An Experiment with Truth and Iniquity*). Dharmavir Bhatnagar's *Andra Yag* is one of the greatest Indian plays of our century, through a dramatic depiction of the eighteenth day of the battle of Kurukshetra, it produces multiple layers of meanings and messages that together form a bitter commentary on war and on the moral cowardice of our dark times. Vishnu Prabhakar's *Tutute Parvati* depicting a conflict between sensibility and moral duty and Mohan Rakesh's *Adhe Adhure* that subtly deals with the dread, isolation and inadequacy experienced by the middle class as a result of their upbringing full of paradoxes and ironies are two other Hindi plays worthy of mention here.

Sriranga's *Snoka Chakra* and G.B. Joshi's *Kadadida Neeru* (Disturbed Waters) which belong to the *navodaya* trend in Kannada lament the loss of moral integrity and sense of sacrifice in the post-Gandhian era. The *navya* (New) drama in Kannada seems to begin with Sriranga's plays like *Kattate Belaku* (Darkness and Light) and *Kelu Janamejaya* (Listen, Janamejay) where the playwright moves from social criticism to a deeper analysis of the nature of man, using innovative techniques. Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq* presents the destiny of an idealist who ends up creating only chaos and violence. His *Hayavadana* employs the strategies of folk drama to express man's futile attempts at perfection. Chandrasekhara Kambar's *Jokumaraswamy* presents the conflict between impotent yet ruthless power on the one hand and creative rebellion on the other and the consequent martyrdom of the peasant protagonist who also represents the phallic god Jokumaraswamy in the play. Chandrasekhar Patil's *Appa* where a man in search of his father finally realizes that he is his own father and P. Lankesh's *Sankranti* that depicts the struggle of Brahminism against the new reformist Veerashaiva cult in the twelfth century are other *navya* plays of import alongwith Kambar's *Sirisampige* and *Chalesa* (Cataract), Lankesh's *Therregalu* (Waves), Nanna Thangigonda Gaudu *Kodi* (Get My Sister a Bridegroom) and Girish Karnad's *Anju Mallige* and *Agni Aur Barkha* (The Fire and the Rain).

In Malayalam, innovation in drama began with the plays of C.J. Thomas like *Avan Veendum Varunnu* (He Comes Again) where he invests ordinary characters with a significance beyond their immediate social reality, *Aa Manushyan Nee Thanne* (Thou Art That Man) that dramatizes King David's predicament in the Bible and *Crime 27 of 1128* that was the first metaplay in the language. C.N. Sreekantan Nair's trilogy based on the *Ramayana* and the experimental play *Kali*, the plays of G. Shankara Pillai and Kavalam Narayana Paniker that revive the traditional theatre in the new context, those of Thoppil Bhasi, Thikkodiyar, K.T. Mohammed, N.N. Pillai and Omchery dealing with social issues and the recent works of younger playwrights like Baby (whose *Nadugeddike* with its ritualistic portrayal of tribal life became an instant success on the stage), Joy Mathew, P. Balachandran

and others have together contributed to the revival of Marathi. V.K. Tendulkar's powerful portrayal of the struggle of the Maharashtra post-war I to exploit the resources of modern Marathi dramatic forms at the formal level. From *Nandhana* (*Count Chach's Daughter*) to *Shikhar*, the Group is in Session to *Ghatnam Kotwal* and *Kandhar* (*Getting a Bride*). Tendulkar's plays have been sharp, uninhibited analyses of human bond in its starkness and cruelty. Vasant Kanetkar (*Ramapada Yatra*), Yeta (*When Ravgad Awakened*), P.L. Deshpande (*Uthbe Ahe Tu Tu*), Yashvi is With You, T.T. Khanolkar, Sanish Alekar, Mahesh Tikarichwar, Jaywant Dalvi, G.P. Deshpande, Ratnakar Markar and others have contributed immensely to contemporary Marathi drama.

Manoranjan Das's Oriya plays like *Juban* (Youth), *August Na* (August Nine), *Agami* (The Oncoming), *Uttaradin* (The Siege), *Aranya Eral* (The Wild Harvest), *Kathapurna* (The Wooden Horse) and *Sabdalipti* (The Word Script) have dealt with society and individual in our historical conjuncture. Loss of identity, the impossibility of communication and political disillusionment have been the recurring themes of his plays. Gopal Chotroy, B.K. Pattanaik, Ramachandra Mishra and B.K. Mahapatra in Oriya, Sant Singh Sekhon, Bawant Gargi, Harcharan Singh, Amrik Singh, Surjit Singh Sethi, K.S. Ghumman and others in Punjabi, I. Janakiraman, Cho Ramaswamy, Aru. Azhakappan, K. Sundaram, Komal Swaminathan and others in Tamil, Pinisetty K. Gangadhara Rao, S.M.Y. Sastry, P. Padmaraju, G. Maruti Rao and others in Telugu have done their best to promote the *genre in their languages*.

Literary criticism in the Indian languages has tried to comprehend and interpret the changing trends in creative literature at times by extending classical Sanskrit poetics to contemporary work or by following the current critical modes in the West from New Criticism, Phenomenology, Semiotics, Myth Criticism and Archetypal Criticism to Structuralism and Deconstruction. Both methods have their obvious limitations. Only a few critics have been able to develop indigenous theories that arise out of the specific context of their language and literature and interpret the evolution of different *genres on their own terms*.

THE DIALECTIC OF DECOLONIZATION

One way of looking at the development of Indian literatures in the last fifty years is to see them as a series of attempts to grapple with the post-colonial situation. Paradigms are tried and given up, communities are imagined and dissolved, traditions are constructed and deconstructed, the principles of unity and of difference are alternately appealed to; the West's presence is acknowledged and negated; radical European concepts and models are alternated with return to the indigenous roots; the classical and the folk elements of the heritage, the written and the oral/performed, are explored

by turns; even the current scene is agog with the dialectic of decolonization. Our creativity has thus been dialogic and our literary discourse marked by the negotiation of a necessary heterogeneity, by a conception of identity that lives through difference and hybridity, a continuous negotiation between 'the self' and 'the other' using different technologies of the self.

There is no return to the past, to the beginning, for, there are no 'beginnings': there is only a constant renewal of our sources of desire and memory, search and discovery, a ceaseless encounter with new points of recognition within representation, a linking in the chain of being and becoming. Delving into the past in order to find coherent elements that will counteract colonialism's attempts to falsify and harm is not enough as Frantz Fanon says in 'Black Skin, White Masks': 'A national culture is not folklore, nor an abstract populism that believes it can discover a people's true nature. A national culture is the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify and praise the action through which that people has created itself and keeps itself in existence.'

Tagore's *Gora* through his structural dysfunctional acts may not be able to unsettle the whole system, but his rebellion can cause a dislocation for he would rather legitimate himself than legitimate the structure. *Gora* in some sense is a paradigmatic text, as it seems to set the agenda for those who wish to fight colonialism, for Gora in his anxiety to be authentic to himself, has to abandon not only his urbanism and fanaticism but his self-righteousness also: an anxiety carried on by several later novels including Anantha Murthy's *Bharatipura* and *Avaste*.

The West is there, as a presence, sometimes as a culture received through modern education, to be encountered, made use of or exorcised. Even the Progressives were, albeit remotely, inspired by the French and Russian realists, an influence they sought to indigenize at the thematic level by taking up the lives of real Indian communities and at the formal level, by establishing a rapport with our narrative and folk traditions. Even Modernism, which its detractors consider to have been the climactic moment of Eurocentric attitudes, formal modes and structures of feeling, did have, built into it, post-colonial tensions and anxieties about tradition. In fact this phase of our literatures witnessed the most prolonged and serious debates on tradition and modernity in our recent literary history.

The heyday of 'Modernisms' in Indian literature seems well-nigh past though its verve for experimentation and its radical stance *vis-à-vis* the establishment have survived in new forms. With some risk of generalization, we may note the following features as the common contexts of our indigenous 'post-Modernisms' variously termed *navyothara* and *uttar-adhunik* that also includes *dalit* and *naveeveethi* (Feminist) literatures; (1) A revolt against the solipsistic tendencies of early Modernism and the consequent longing to communicate even with the public traditionally kept out of literature's sacred grove; (2) a pursuit of the politics of difference reflected

in an attempt to forge collective identities based on differences of class, caste, gender, region, language and culture as a response to the homogenization of Indian culture sought by hegemonic forces; (3) a non-atavistic retrieval of the past that at times results in a kind of *bricolage*, a frequency of quotations of elements from previous styles and periods illuminating a present situation by comparison or contrast, and at times simply contributing to a process of cultural anamnesis; (4) a growing perception that the status-quoist ideas of progress do not take into serious account cultural differences and variations in world views; (5) a consequent suspicion of all universalizing ideologies that conceal differences, or reduce them to a single dimension; (6) the loss of the 'Modernist' confidence that 'high' or 'avant-garde' art is intrinsically more valuable than 'low' or 'popular' art; (7) a growing disbelief in the modern project that was supposed to be valid for all mankind but found mankind divided — one section confronted with the challenge of complexity and the other with the ancient task of mere survival; (8) an awareness of issues beyond class struggle — of caste, gender, war and ecology; (9) a preoccupation with post-cognitive and ontological questions like 'Which world is this? What is to be done in it? Which of my selves is to do it? How are worlds constituted? How do they differ? What happens when different kinds of worlds are placed in confrontation, or when the boundaries between worlds are violated? What are the modes of existence of the text and the world?' and (10) a multi-directional movement within the literary scene in general and a polyphony within specific literary texts resulting from these perceptions that go against all forms of standardization natural to consumer societies.

The best of our writers now know that unless we realize *Swaraj* in ideas, our great country is doomed to die without an individual signature of her own, even while she signs in different scripts.

D. P. PATTANAYAK

The Languages: A Multicultural Plurilingual Country

PROFILE OF INDIAN MULTILINGUALISM

India, unlike the Western nation-states, Africa and Latin America, is a multicultural multilingual country. Diversity is its dominant characteristic. This diversity is reflected in its 1,652 mother tongues (1961 census), belonging to four language families and written in ten major scripts and a host of minor ones, 4,604 castes and communities, 4,000 faiths and beliefs. It is also reflected in its genetic diversity: 46,000 species of plants and 65,000 species of animals. The four language families in which Indians speak are Austric, Dravidian, Indo-Aryan and Sino-Tibetan. The languages are written in eleven major writing systems: Perso-Arabic, Nagari, Gurumukhi, Gujarati, Oriya, Bengali-Assamese-Manipuri, Telugu-Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam, Tibetan and Roman and a host of minor writing systems.

It would be interesting to linger at the outset on the differences between the monolingual monocultural, and the multilingual multicultural attitudes. The multilingual attitude is reflected in the old Tamil saying *Yadum ure Yavarum kelir* (the world is my village and all people my brethren) or the Sanskrit saying *Basudhaiva Kutumbakam* (the world is my family). The dominant monolingual Western attitude is reflected in the following statement: 'The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner, the man for whom each country is as his native soil is already strong, but only the man for whom the whole world is as a foreign land is perfect' — Hugo of St Victor (quoted by Fred Dallmayr, *Beyond Orientalism*, State University of New York Press, 1996, the dedication page).

There is another way of looking at the same phenomenon. The dominant western monolingualism regards one language as the norm, two languages as acceptable, three or four languages as tolerable and many languages as absurd. The multilingual attitude is the reverse of this. Many languages are the norm, any reasonable restriction on the choice of language use is acceptable, the imposition of a limit of three languages is tolerable and one language is absurd. For a long time bilingualism was considered subtractive in the West. With the change in research orientation, bilingualism was considered additive. There is great reluctance to accept multilingualism as normal. Ever since 1991, when the Harvard publication entitled *Bilingualism and Multiculturalism* appeared,

Western scholars have been stuck at that point of research. They are unwilling to accept multilingualism as the carrier of multiculturalism.

Travellers, down the ages, whether from Persia, Greece, China, Middle East or other parts of the world, have referred to our part of the world as India. Scholars like M.B. Emeneau and C.P. Massica established India as a single linguistic area. The processes leading to the formation of a single linguistic, sociolinguistic and semantic area are many. One or two examples suffice. One is the creation of pidgins and creoles. In the beginning of research in linguistics, it was believed that pidgins were not possible without the involvement of at least one European language. But the three pidgins of India — Nagamese, Sadni and Desia — are the results of contact among Indian languages. The second process is the operation of two or three languages with a single underlying grammar. The Kupwar study by John Gumperz demonstrates that three languages, Marathi, Kannada and Urdu, belonging to two language families, Indo-Aryan and Dravidian, operate with a single grammar. Assimilation is a third process. Minor and minority languages give up their claim as distinct languages and get assimilated into the dominant language of the region. In fact over the last fifty years there has been an accelerated linguistic diversity, as there has been in the multiplicity of plant and animal species.

LITERATURES OF INDIA

The history of India's literatures is 5000 years old. The earliest writing took the form of inscriptions on palm leaves with iron stylus, and texts written on birch barks with ink. The introduction of printing presses in the mid-eighteenth century revolutionized the acquisition, storage and retrieval of information and knowledge.

India's oral tradition dates back to the advent of human beings in the subcontinent. Today all sub-groups living in India have rich resources of folklore. This refers not only to folk-tales and folk-songs, but to folk sayings and oral histories. Over the last fifty years the emphasis has shifted from the collection of folk literature to its analysis and interpretation. This has further led to the discovery of regional as well as national universal folk literature, thus making India a unified folklore area.

Apart from Sanskrit and Tamil, which have a longer history, most of the other dominant literatures of India acquired their distinctive personality over the last 800 years or so. The transition from the medieval to the modern phase can be traced to the middle of the last century. Their growth has been particularly marked during the last fifty years. Besides literature and conceptual prose, writing in different content areas also developed during this time.

Earlier, Sanskrit provided the model for the development of Indian languages and literatures. During the last fifty years, the model has been English. After the establishment of their individual identities, attention is now focussed on their commonalities. Four decades ago the National Academy of Letters,

the Sahitya Akademi, spoke of an Indian Literature written in different languages, and this concept has found widespread acceptance.

Languages develop through use. In the euphoria after Independence, it was imagined that mother-tongues would be used extensively in education, administration and mass communication. As time passed, the educational use of mother-tongues in fact receded, making way for English. After English was declared the Associate Official Language of the country, the pace of the use of Indian languages slowed down. English became not only the language of intellection of the elite middle class within each region, but the link language among the elites of the country. Translation into English, which gave Indian literatures a wider audience, only resulted in fewer people learning the language of other regions.

INDIA AS A LINGUISTIC AREA

The study of a linguistic area is primarily a study of linguistic geography — an extension of methods of linguistic geography to problems of area typology, the identification, description and analysis of the convergence of otherwise related and unrelated languages exhibiting common characteristics.

Emeneau has provided a classic definition of such an area when he says: 'an area which includes languages belonging to more than one family but showing traits in common which are found not to belong to the other member of (at least) one of the families' (Emeneau M.B., 1956, *India as a Linguistic Area*, Lg 32.1:3-16). Massica suggests that Indo-Europeans were a group of area-unrelated people who came to resemble one another through close linguistic association.

It must be noted that the process of convergence is made uneven by the natural — supplemented by social — barriers of communication. Linguistic convergence takes place where the barriers are few and there is a great measure of communication and cultural exchange. Scholars consider the Caucasus, the west coast of North America, the Balears, South-East Asia, Northern Eurasia and Ethiopia as such areas, sometimes on the basis of phonological affinity and sometimes on the basis of syntactic, morphological and idiomatic affinities.

Word order is one of the defining characteristics of the Indian linguistic area. Indian languages, in spite of some exceptions, are left branching, the object preceding the verb and the modifier preceding the modified. Massica shows how a thick bundle of isoglosses separates India from South-East Asia beyond Burma, from Arabic, from Persia and from Africa beyond Ethiopia.

Causative verbs are another defining characteristic of the Indian linguistic area. There is great confusion as some causative verbs are syntactically definable whereas others are morphologically overtly marked. Indian languages are of the latter type.

Conjunction is another typical feature of the South Asian linguistic area. Sometimes involving subordination and sometimes co-ordination, it is expressed by conjunctive particles or affixes or by a nonfinite verbal form. The non-finite verbal form is variously called conjunctive participle, absolutive, past participle, verbal participle, adverbial participle, gerund, past nonfinite, converb and incomplete verb, thus adding to the confusion in grammatical literature. The conjunctive participle is preferred by Massica.

Different from the conjunctive participle + finite verb construction, in which the main verb is the participle and the finite verb is a modifying auxiliary, there is the ordinary occurrence of conjunctive participle + finite verb construction where the finite verb is the main verb and the participle is a secondary element. Explicating compounds are found in all four language families of India.

The dative construction is yet another marker of the Indian linguistic area. This is shared by languages of all the families.

Scholars have viewed convergence leading to area formation from linguistic/sociolinguistic, historical and areal perspectives. It is not always the fact that the dominant language is the donor and the dominated language the recipient. As B.K.K. Reddy, in his 'Syntactic Convergence in the Central Indian Languages' (in *Sri Ramakrishnaya Centenary Volume*, Sita Trust, Vishakapatnam, 1992) shows, the dominated Munda languages have been donors to the dominant Dravidian and Indo-Aryan languages. His study points to the creation of regional universals leading to India's emergence as a linguistic area. Those who speak of sub-areas run the risk of being misunderstood of talking about a top-down concept. Regional universals, on the other hand, could be interpreted as growing in concentric circles and fitting in with the notion of network of relations.

SCHOLARS AND THEIR WORK

Linguistics came to India in the 1950s through a the Rockefeller Foundation. Prior to that we had Comparative Philology. Calcutta University has a Department of Comparative Philology, which was presided over by Dr S.K. Chatterjee. Dr Chatterjee's *Origin and Development of the Bengali Language* set a model which resulted in the production of about a dozen such studies. Chatterjee produced one distinguished student, Dr Sukumar Sen, who taught for about forty years. At the time when linguistics came to the country, scholars who were in the forefront were S.M. Katre, A.M. Ghatge, T.P. Meenakshi Sundaram, T.N. Sreekanthaiya, Mariappa Bhat, Somaiyaji, Dharendra Verma, Baburam Saxena, Vishwanath Prasad and V.I. Subramonium. Katre, an Indo-Aryan scholar had worked extensively on Panini. His other interests are lexicography, historical Indo-Aryan languages and dialectology. He is the chief architect of linguistics in India. A.M. Ghatge has been his able successor. His major interests, besides historical Indo-Aryan, was Prakrit and Jainism and

lexicography. I. P. Meenakshi Sundaram, I. N. Srikantharaya, Marappa Bhatt and Somaiyaji were the leading lights from South India, who were scholars both in Dravidian as well as in Sanskritic studies. They were comparative philologists in the true sense of the term. B. R. Saxena and Viswanath Prasad with Dharendra Verma were the tripod of Philology in the Indo-Gangetic plains. While all of them were philologists, Dharendra Verma, the phonetician, carved a niche for himself in his specialized field.

The second group of scholars who carried forward linguistics in the country were V. I. Subramoniam, P. B. Pandit and Bh. Krishnamurti. Subramoniam, with his training in the United States, worked extensively on the Dravidian languages with special reference to Tamil and Malayalam. He was the founder Vice-Chancellor of the Tamil University. He established and nurtured the International School of Dravidian Linguistics. P. B. Pandit, a scholar in Gujarati, did remarkable work before his death at a comparatively young age. He headed the Department of Linguistics of Delhi University. Bh. Krishnamurti's contribution is in Telugu dialectology and Telugu sociolinguistics.

The present author can be described as the link between this group and the subsequent group of scholars. He taught Post-Graduate Oriya at Shantiniketan for eleven years and acted as Chief Linguist of the American Institute of Indian Studies for six years. His thesis, 'A Controlled Historical Reconstruction of Oriya, Assamese, Bengali and Hindi', is a landmark in linguistic studies in India. Pattanayak brought his experience to bear upon the Central Institute of Indian Languages (C.I.I.L.), which he was called upon to establish by the Government of India. He also founded the Phonetic Society of India, The Lexicographic Society of India, and a number of other societies. The C.I.I.L. worked in close co-operation with the states and helped them in formulating and implementing policies and programmes. With the major languages, it helped in curricular reform, preparation of textual materials, and their use in education, administration and mass communication. It identified gaps and offered training programmes in sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, reading and evaluation. Once universities were ready to take these over, the Institute moved into newer areas. In all these, the Institute focussed on multilingualism and mother-tongue education.

The Institute set up six regional centres which concerned themselves with language teaching and learning. These centres taught languages other than their mother-tongues to secondary-school teachers. The centres undertook the production of textual material. Audio and videotapes accompanied the books. Films were made to give a feel for culture.

Among the contemporaries of Pattanayak were A. B. Kelkar, Agasthialingam, L. M. Khubchandani, Braj and Yamuna Kachru, M. L. Apte and A. K. Ramanujan. Kelkar, who worked on theoretical issues, wrote extensively in Marathi. Agasthialingam was a pioneer in transformational grammar. Khubchandani spent more time in active linguistics abroad than within

the country. The Kachru, Bhat and Yamuna, Apte and Ramanujan, who became US citizens, bridged the distance between America and India. Yamuna worked in the area of formal educational grammar, Bhat on the Englishes of the world. He became a point of reference in English studies all over the world. Apte worked in anthropology and linguistics and Ramanujan worked in the areas of sociolinguistics, folklore and cultural studies. A poet who has been included in many anthologies, he excelled in translation from Tamil and Kannada.

A somewhat younger group consisted of R.N. Shivastava, B.G. Misra and C.J. Daswani. They were complemented by Prem Singh, K.V. Subba Rao, Anant, Satta and Ramakant Agnihotri. In South India, H.S. Ananthanarayana, K. Karunakaran, K. Rangan, Rajaram, G.S.S. Rao, Prabodh Chandran Nair, E. Annamalai, Israel, and B.R.K. Reddy made their mark. Shivastava, trained both in the USSR and USA, left an excellent record in the field of linguistic studies in the country. His papers have been published in six volumes by his admirers. He worked incessantly on all dimensions of linguistics and put Indian scholarship on the world map. B.G. Misra and Prem Singh worked in the field of historical linguistics. B.G. Misra's work on internal reconstruction of Hindi remains unexcelled even today. B.R.K. Reddy and Karunakaran worked on sociolinguistics. Reddy worked on Munda, Dravidian and Indo-Aryan. Nagamma Reddy is the best trained phonetician in the country. She has worked on instrumental phonetics as well as articulatory phonetics, phonetic theory as well as application. Rangan and Rajaram concentrated on theoretical and applied aspects of linguistics respectively.

There is a Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages situated at Hyderabad which is a 'deemed' university. Two of its scholars who have done research of high quality in the area of theoretical syntax are K.A. Jayasheelan and Amritavalli. Prabal Dasgupta is another member of the team, which takes leadership in theoretical syntax. S.K. Verma, a former Director and Vice-Chancellor of the CIEFL, is a scholar both in English and Hindi.

THE PLACE AND ROLE OF ENGLISH

English is a colonial heritage of India. Those who speak about ditching English or replacing it by Hindi are unaware of the existing realities in the country. As Ramakant Agnihotri points out, those who are in the profession of teaching English and dealing with applied linguistics 'continue regarding errors as evidence of non-learning and look for their sources in the native or target language of the learners' (*South Asian Language Review*, vol. 1, no. 2, June 1991). This shows the hiatus between theory and practice.

The uses and role of English as a second language have been discussed extensively by Indian scholars. Probably the first thesis dealing with mother-tongue English was written by J.M. Bayer. While dealing with English as the

mother tongue of Anglo-Indians and the Anglo-Indians who were model English teachers, she takes three generations and shows their use of English.

There is a body of good literature which discusses the role of English in India. While some extol and others decry English in India, an objective picture emerges which may be summarized as follows:

- Like Chinese and Hindi, English is also a multi-core language.
- English occupies a position disproportionate to the number of its speakers and its importance in India.
- Science and technology are taught through English on the assumption that they cannot be taught through Indian languages.
- Early English promotes anomie, alienation and culture perception blindspots.
- Early English curbs creativity and innovativeness.
- English is the support system of a mini-sector of entrepreneurs, and provides rank, status and wealth to those who worship it.
- English comes to be equated with providing life chances to young people and promotes brain drain.
- It encourages division of society into categories like urban:rural, developed:underdeveloped, rich:poor, elites and masses.

It is often forgotten that English is a source of strength when it supplements and complements Indian languages, and of weakness when it is an adversary. Needless to say, English becomes an adversary of Indian languages when it surreptitiously displaces Indian languages from many domains.

There is a growing demand for teaching English from the starting point of education. The lower one goes down in the ladder, the lower is the quality of education. With unqualified teachers, poor teaching materials and uncertain methods, children grow up incompetent both in English as well as in their mother-tongues.

There is a Central Institute of Hindi, a Central Institute of Sanskrit, a Central Board for Urdu, and a Central Board for Sindhi. In the States, there are Institutes of regional languages. There is a Central Sahitya Akademi and state academies of literature. There are minority language institutes and tribal language institutes in some states. There is a statutory body called the Commission for Linguistic Minorities. But there is little co-ordination among these bodies.

The core cultural inheritance of the majority of Indians is embedded in Sanskrit. The discovery of Panini not only provided a model for linguists and grammarians all over the world, it also threw a challenge to excel it. Needless to say, we are far away from that goal. Lynn White Jr., writing in the *American Historical Review* (1960) observed that the Indian concept of perpetual motion 'not only helped European engineers to generalise their concept of mechanical power, but also provoked a thinking by analogy, that profoundly influenced Western Scientific views'. Sanskrit illumined

philosophy, literature, art, the sciences, engineering, medicine, surgery, archaeology, architecture and statecraft. The discovery of fundamental concepts like zero and the delineation of the decimal system by Indians had such an impact that the Arabs referred to mathematics as the 'Indian Art'.

TRIBAL EDUCATION

The idea of tribal education through tribal languages deserves special consideration. There are tribal languages spoken by people who are more numerous than those who speak Sindhi or Kashmiri. And yet they are not recognized for purposes of education. Stagnation and wastage among tribals are related to the non-use of their languages as media or as necessary links to the dominant school language. It is seldom recognized that to tribals, who are on the lowest rung of poverty and social hierarchy, the distance from elitism as well as the standard form of the language they are called upon to study is so wide as to appear insurmountable. Education, it has been said, 'creates occupational differentiation affecting role differentiation and consequently social interactions' (Desai I.P., 'Planning Education in Tribal Areas', in *Integrated Tribal Development Planning*, NICD, Hyderabad, 1975).

The tribes encompass all the four language families. Many small groups speaking different languages and dialects which are mostly unwritten find communication and education difficult. Both teachers as well education managers erroneously consider economic and societal reasons responsible for low achievement. The fact that language plays a major role in the low performance and consequent low self-image of the tribal child has not been properly appreciated.

Those who question the feasibility of education through hundreds of tribal mother-tongues forget that the actual number of important tribal languages is less than a hundred. A call for education through the mother-tongue, both for tribals as well as non-tribals, is to ensure good and creative education for the learning child and to provide scope for the flowering of its personality. If the language which the child brings to the classroom is derided, the child develops a sense of self-depreciation. It is unfortunate that linking the home language of the child with the school language is nobody's business. The parents who do not control the school language, the teachers who are ignorant of the child's language, are unwilling to assume responsibility for the linkage. A bilingual primary education that will ensure a smooth transition from home language to school language and permit the child to study as an equal with the school language user at the post-primary stage is the most viable form of education in a multilingual country.

The use of the mother tongue for the education of tribals has resulted in experimentation with bilingual primary education. This aims at linking the home language of the child with the school language. Starting with learning to read and write the home language, learning to speak the school

language and moving into the reading and writing of the school language in the broad outline of the programme. It emphasizes smooth transition from the known to the unknown and the preparedness of the tribal child to study as an equal of the dominant language-speaking child at the post-primary stage. The visible outcome is the reduction in dropout rate, increase in motivation and increase in overall performance in language learning. Although the experiment was conducted in Nagaland, Haryana, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Maharashtra, this was not sufficient to make an impact on the whole country.

CONCLUSION

The New Education Policy announced in 1986 refers us back to 1968. While during the past fifteen years five important Reports on the language issue have been published in the United Kingdom, in India we are being referred back to the Three-Language Formula of 1968. That policy document of the Government of India had stated that the three-language formula is a *strategy* and not a *goal*. Subsequent managers of education seem to have forgotten this.

In 1961, the Mathematical Society of America established a linguistic unit. In 1997, we are still asking whether linguistics is arts or science. Although language and politics are intimately connected, linguistics seldom finds place in political science. Similarly, linguistics does not find place in sociology, psychology or even in literature. Linguistics is not a subject in many universities, to say nothing of undergraduate studies. Even in communication studies, linguistics finds no place. This happens due to lack of interdisciplinarity among disciplines and due to the pseudo-autonomy of disciplines. It is seldom realized that literacy is a language-related activity. Linguistics could make a significant contribution to literacy, but it does not find place in the literacy curriculum. The same is true of the media.

Over the years, linguistics has gone beyond the common man. Historical linguistics, phonology, morphology, computational linguistics and applied linguistics have taken a back seat in linguistic curricula. After running in search of theory after transformation generative grammar, GB, and so on, we have reached a point where there is a dearth of personnel for teaching a well-rounded course in linguistics.

The British, during 200 years of their occupation of India, succeeded in making two per cent of the Indian population familiar with some varieties of English. During the past fifty years, we have raised the percentage to four.

The British claimed their role was to civilize the uncivilized. English was an instrument for this purpose. Development economics seems to be a kind of second coming of colonialists who believe that the Western way is the only way to development. A third coming of the colonialists has also taken place with the avowed object of protecting our environment. Whether it was to civilize, develop or protect the environment, the aim appears to

the exploitation. In fact, and itself, English is now being dealt with by the British Trade Authority and has become a marketable commodity.

During the last fifty years, the importance of English seems to have grown. English is not only the associate official language of the Union; it has also become the state official language of some of the multilingual states of the North-East. It is the dominant claimant for being the language of education, administration and mass communication. It has increased the distance between the rich and the poor, the urban and the rural, the educated and the uneducated. The thin plastering of English across different levels of education has resulted in 'semi lingualism', incompetence in both English and the mother-tongue.

If one takes a look at the publishing scenario, one finds that fifty per cent of the titles published in a year are in English, with all Indian languages put together accounting for the remaining half. In education one hears about textbooks and not about collateral reading. In administration, there is external allegiance and internal betrayal as regards the language of administration. In electronic media, Indian languages are used for entertainment and English for **conceptional communication**.

India is a multilingual and pluricultural country. Nation-building in such countries could only be done by recognizing diversity. Unfortunately, the call for national integration requires the death of multiplicity. Joining the mainstream is an euphemism for assimilation. India can yet be a real leader of the non-western world if it recognizes its strengths. One of these strengths is its **multiculturalism**.

SHEILA DHAR

Music: From the Traditional to the Modern

Like most people, I had an ageing uncle who began every sentence with 'when we were young . . .'. I used to pray fervently that I should never become a bore like him. His vocal disapproval of the world around him was tiresome to all those who fully enjoyed their environment, including the youngsters he constantly addressed in the hope of restoring their values. It is obvious that my prayers have not been answered. The ageing uncle within me peeps out too often for comfort. But I excuse myself on the ground that nostalgia is a valid state of mind, especially when it comes to memorable musical experiences. However, it is not very helpful in assessing what has really been happening in the music world.

We are about to enter the noisiest century in history. Silence, according to what I have gathered from my gurus, is the starting point of all music. It is also a fundamental concept in raga where unbroken melodic lines of sound are drawn on a canvas of silence to create the musical portrait of a heightened state of consciousness. All traditional Indian music makes use of silence in many other subtle and delicate ways which are all but lost to the musician of today and of course, very sadly, to the listener as well. The gradual invasion of silence by ever-increasing noise levels is to my mind the single most important change that has come about in the music world in the last fifty years. It has irreversibly affected performers and coarsened listeners, producers, presenters and marketeers of music.

If one were to consider just the physical aspect of the music that is being produced today, one could justifiably say that it is louder and much more strident than it has ever been. This stems from the attitudes of both music maker and listener. Both have changed drastically in recent years. Music can no longer be the intimate communication that was its original intention. Now it has to be shouted out, not whispered, if it is to be heard at all above the din that pervades life today. To get and hold the attention of the listener, musicians can no longer depend entirely on their art. They have to make a little go a long way and too often resort to grandstanding and gimmicks. Today's audience does not consist of connoisseurs who were brought up to tune in to the mind of the performing musician, but of a vigorous new class of passive listeners who feel entitled to the best that life has to offer and expect it to be served to them without any effort on their part.

That the new audiences are now a hundred times larger and consist mostly of the rising middle classes and young people in their twenties is

undoubtedly a welcome sign from a societal point of view. The treasures that our music has to offer are no longer the preserve of the privileged few. Music is for everyone. It is a commodity that is consumed like any other product in a fast changing society. This development must be welcomed. But the consumers of this commodity have also been changing rapidly and today bear hardly any resemblance to the patrons of music fifty years ago. Today's patrons of music are more powerful than they have ever been in the history of Indian music. Their strength is in their numbers, in their omnipresence, their mobility, their boundless energy and above all their determination to get the best there is. And access to the best has never been easier. The greatest music can quite affordably be in the hands of anyone who cares to buy a recorded cassette. One can listen at leisure, whenever and wherever one wishes. It has often occurred to me that at least physically every literate music lover can have almost as much in the way of music as the emperor Akbar might have had at the height of his power, and more. A myriad music events take place almost every day, at least in the big cities. Most of them are open to the public and charge no entrance fee, as they are usually sponsored by corporate enterprises building a more attractive image of themselves. Music and dance schools have sprung up almost at every street corner and it is altogether a most lucrative proposition for institutions to engage in all forms of cultural promotion. Surprisingly, this does not include any serious effort to cultivate the ear and mind of the uninitiated but interested potential listener. Even so, the volume of the recorded music available continues to rise.

The motivations of the public that flocks to concert halls are also more varied than they have ever been. Not everyone who makes the effort to attend is necessarily interested in the music, as used to be the case not so long ago. Many of the young come because they are in search of their lost cultural identity. Jaded politicians come to prop up their image. Socialites come to be seen and because it is a pleasant and possibly rewarding way to pass the time. Snobbery, curiosity, boredom, networking and entertainment are some other reasons which draw audiences and can sometimes account for nearly half their numbers. This also confirms that after Independence Indian music has gained immeasurably in prestige if not in genuine sources of artistic stimulus.

WANING OF DEDICATION

The ease with which the doors of the music world can now open has naturally brought in an element of casualness even among rising young musicians who seriously wish to excel. The intense devotion and dedication that used to be an inalienable part of the music business have rapidly waned, although the level of activity on the music scene has risen to a feverish pitch. This in itself is a sure formula for dilution of quality. So is the rise of the personality cult.

The average musician today would rather work at being a superstar than at deepening the music material he has inherited or acquired. The press and television often publicize the appearance of a new raga specially crafted for this or that national occasion by some celebrity, while many rare and beautiful ragas that have existed for centuries languish and face extinction from sheer neglect. Most musicians are too busy 'doing' music in some form or other to ever think about it. No one considers *chintan* and *manan* a part of a musician's normal discipline, least of all the performing artists themselves. This is not how it used to be.

Another conspicuous change from the fifties and sixties is the loss of innocence among the practitioners of the art of music. Though the masters we admired in our youth were human and undoubtedly indulged their prejudices and jealousies, their art was the centre of their universe, in the same way in which a child's mother is its ultimate, inviolable haven. Once they entered their music, they remained effortlessly true to it and to themselves, regardless of the audience's reaction. They took it for granted that everybody would find it as engrossing as they did themselves. Musicians like Anir Khan and Nikhil Bannerji did not even raise their eyes during a performance because they were so deeply involved with what they were doing and oblivious of everything else. They were sure that nothing significant could possibly exist beyond the frontiers of their world of music. It is in this sense that I call them innocent. There are several anecdotes that illustrate this quality which characterized a whole generation of musicians.

Once Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan found himself sitting next to the president of India after he had received a state award. The president politely asked him what in his opinion the government could do to help the cause of music. After thinking carefully for a few moments, he said what can roughly be translated as: 'Sir, Darbari is in a very bad condition. It is a great raga. People are treating it very badly, specially the *gandhara* and *dhaivata*. This is a serious matter. Please do something about it.' The president was understandably flustered and is reported to have instructed an attending official to 'look into the matter'. Then there is the well-known story of Ustad Bundu Khan who, on being told that his scheduled broadcast had been cancelled because Mr Jinnah had arrived unexpectedly and had to be fitted in the same slot, is reported to have said, again roughly translated: 'I have played with every musician in the country, but I have never even heard of this singer. What note does he use as his *sa*?' Another telling incident is about Krishna Rao Shankar Pandit who was the guest of honour at a glittering function in New Delhi. Rajiv Gandhi happened to drop in since the venue was the house of a family friend. Naturally the hostess first introduced the chief guest. The eighty-year-old maestro beamed graciously at the clean-faced youngster who had come up to meet him. When his hostess murmured that this was the prime minister, he smiled at him and said 'Oh, you must be the biggest person in Radio!' This was the first and most important thing that came to

his mind. Mallikarjun Mansur courteously turned down an invitation to perform for the Festival of India in America because the concert schedules interfered with the timings of his daily practice and meditation. These are some profiles of attractive and loveable personalities. One can hardly imagine people of this ilk performing with a sheaf of air tickets in their breast pockets in the mannerisms and dress styles of megastars of Western jazz and rock music, or working the public-relations circuits armed with glossy brochures listing their achievements and the standing ovations they received in this or that foreign country. In the old days no printed bio-data was ever asked for or needed. All publicity was by word of mouth and the grapevine of the music community. The artists themselves were usually no party to any promotional exercise that involved them personally. The point here is not that they were better people; only that their music reflected their absolute faith in their own world and therefore carried an indescribable depth and conviction which is rarely heard today.

CRUMBLING WALLS OF GHARANAS

This world has started to break down. The over-confidence which comes with easy access has affected not only audiences but also the new generation of learners. They are a breed apart from the worshipful disciples whose legendary devotion to the master and his art used to be a favourite feature of many a myth in the music world. They are much more canny and have a far more acute awareness of themselves as individuals. Even if they are associated with a particular musical cuisine or *gharana* they feel free to graze where they will and pick up whatever suits their repertoire and temperament at a particular phase in their career. *Aalaap* in the Kirana style, *taan* in the Jaipur style, *bol baant* in the Agra mode and *aakaar* in the manner of singers of Patiala *gharana* can and do appear simultaneously in the performances of many young celebrities in the making. The walls of the *gharanas* are crumbling and have lost the will to keep their specialities to themselves. The newly acquired license to cater for a variety of tastes gives performers a heady feeling of freedom and power. Nothing is wrong with this except that dishes are being served before the cuisine has attained perfection. And this is a pity as it robs the future of the ripest and richest fruits of single-minded concentration. The intelligent, confident, mobile, vitamin-enriched and uncommitted pupil of today feels he can get results even by sitting at the feet of a tape recorder if a guru is problematic. In the present set-up of musical education, he does not have to hang on the lips of a guru who is not likely to be available at his convenience if he is available at all. The musical aspirant today feels much more in control of his destiny. His fresh young mind is influenced by the systematic approach of Western researchers who are trained to ask questions and examine everything under a microscope. Unlike his earlier counterpart, he too demands a reason for everything. Armed with his tape recorder

and cassette collection, he is sure he can imitate any aspect of any *gharana* he fancies because he can repeat a lesson at will and as many times as necessary. He does not need to collect carefully, memorize and cherish every pearl that might drop from the lips of a guru as it might not come his way again. Disciples of earlier generations had to do this as a matter of course.

But it has to be admitted that despite the ouster of devotion as the supreme quality in serious musical aspiration, the results are less disappointing than one feared. Never before have there been so many new 'prodigies' in both the Hindustani and Karnatik classical traditions. This phenomenon has less to do with population growth in general than with the devising of new learning techniques combined with the much higher level of efficiency and competence among the young. The substitution of devotion by skill, application, and an attitude of 'If anyone can do it, I can too' has been effective in ways that are very important to the future of music in our country. Most of the new stars, especially in the Karnatik system, are in their teens and early twenties. The 'young' discoveries who were hailed by the world of Hindustani music only fifteen years ago are already presenting their own disciples on the stage! In addition to the crucial tape recorder, there is a battery of dependable gadgets such as electronic *tanpuras* and *taal-malas* which seem to work like seven-league boots for the new celebrities in the matter of their regular practice. The gradual fading of the *guru-shishya parampara* does not seem to have blocked the phenomenal increase in the number of whiz kids in both classical traditions. Organizers and impresarios no longer have to worry about who to feature in concerts because the possibilities are inexhaustible and still exceed the opportunities.

In one sense, there has been progress. Something has undoubtedly been gained. At the same time a sense of loss pervades the ears that were young in the 1950s. To them, the intensity and conviction, the directness and innocence of the musicians of the earlier part of this century still have an unsurpassable musical quality which cannot be found in the most sophisticated recordings of today. As an old master put it, the clever new generation of musicians have eyes not only at the back of their heads but also in their armpits. According to him, too much seeing and too little intuition can rob the mind of its real musical potential.

Both the Hindustani and Karnatik systems of classical music demand a perseverance and concentration that is difficult to achieve in any case. The existing distractions of modern life, for instance the persistent sounds of film music and commercial audio-cassettes offered almost round the clock by television and radio, make things even harder. The music that deluges us consists mainly of innovations devised by Indian composers on synthesizers and uses all the sounds of the world in an effort to present something that is both novel and instantly appealing. However, the music industry's frantic efforts to ensure that the product is being manufactured in sufficient quantity to match the varied and ever-growing demand has unleashed a new energy

which speaks of the richness, the vigour and earthiness of our cultural roots, even though all efforts at composition do not qualify as great music. Nevertheless, I would say that of over 5000 remarkable pieces which are likely to be self-conscious and derivative exercises in musical packaging, there is usually at least one which commands attention because it has been ignited by a **genuinely creative imagination**.

A desirable fall-out of this charming and exploring has been that musically the North and the South have come closer today than they have been for a long time. The new Indian pop and Hindi film music have performed the signal service of providing a common meeting ground for music directors from both systems. In fact the conservative South has been more enterprising than the North in this respect because the first real fusion trends were contributed by music directors of Tamil films. It is now commonplace to hear *varnams* and *ttams* of the Karnaṭik system embroidering Hindustani raga-based pieces. The accompanying music of Bharatanatyam and Kathak often merges in depicting modern themes. Vocalists, instrumentalists and percussionists from both systems frequently appear together on stage in various permutations and combinations which do not fail to thrill the public. New music makers from the South are bestsellers in the North and singers from the South want to master *thumri* and *ghazal*. This was unthinkable even fifteen years ago when the two systems were disapproving and wary of each other, even though they were tacitly agreed on the traditional promises of classical music — inner joy and the enrichment of the spirit.

WEAKENING HEARTBEATS OF CONTINUITY

Today, the term 'spirit' carries a different meaning altogether, something more akin to enthusiasm and optimism than anything to do with spirituality. People generally prefer to be teased and prodded to being soothed and elated. This is what the new music-maker caters to. At the centre of his tireless experimentation is a preoccupation with creating new sounds rather than with creating music. In the video cassette market, Indian folk and tribal music and elements of raga still provide the skeleton of most of the offerings, but the flesh defies identification. One can hear African and South American rhythms, melodies from the Middle East, Western-style delivery of pop songs, the sounds of Western jazz and much else in the music being produced in India today. This in itself is no disaster because Indian music has always absorbed influences from outside and integrated them into the mainstream. But the thread of continuity has always been there like a reassuring heartbeat. This sound is becoming fainter and sometimes cannot be heard at all.

Indian music cannot afford to sever *all* connection with its inherent values of purity and restraint. To the extent that these are diminished, the intrinsic quality of the music, however serviceable it may prove to be socially, suffers. At the same time music has to be the genuine product of an age. It

must draw life and sustenance from the environment if it is not to degenerate into a museum piece. And herein lies the dilemma. There is no question that the musical forms and values associated with all traditional Indian music are in a state of flux. There is also no question that this is not the first time in history that this has happened. Change is always painful for diehards but experience tells us that it does not necessarily imply a negative development. When the *khayal* first established itself alongside the ancient *dhrupad* form around the fifteenth century it was considered an unworthy upstart and frowned upon by purists in much the same manner as music lovers who were young in the 1950s view the innovations in Indian film and pop music today. Yet one has to admit that this unworthy upstart evolved into a rich and highly aesthetic form which is universally hailed as the finest flowering of the Hindustani raga system. It is relevant to remember that the *khayal* in its turn meted out to *thumri* and *dadra* the same treatment it had received itself at the hands of the *dhrupad*. Taking a lesson from this example in recent history, we must reserve judgement on the trends that are overtaking music in India today. It is perfectly possible that a new music which will be 'truer' to the times is in the making even as we speak. What seems sometimes to be an assault on ancient musical ears might well be the birth pangs of a new musical vision. The example of the *khayal* — there are many more — should caution us against instant assessment. The new pop music of video and film, whatever else it may lack, certainly is not feeble. On the contrary, it is almost always characterized by vigour, energy and an intense desire to communicate. Admittedly these are not enough to qualify sound as music but there is a fair chance that these could turn out to be positive attributes. Being too near the scene, we cannot really say.

What we can do is look at the changing trends and try to guess where they are headed, starting with how things used to be. Not so long ago, the traditional *baithak* with its hushed air of intelligent expectancy was regarded the proper setting for the intimate and delicate idiom of classical music. It was ideal for both performer and listener. The two hundred people present were all connoisseurs, each in his own way. Each was aware of his crucial role as listener and had his responses finely tuned to the extraordinary communication he was about to receive and be a part of, as ready to hear as the musician was to play or sing. The ideal for both was to share each phase of the creative process, the quality of which in our music depends very largely on spontaneous interaction between artist and audience. A performance was an intensely personal affair, with deeply entrenched rules of listening etiquette which spoke of a real cultural connection with the music. Only peers or elders were allowed to be vocal in their appreciation. Successful concerts did not end with mechanical bursts of clapping, but human sounds such as *wah wah! bahut khub, kya kehne*, and so on. Younger enthusiasts had to hold themselves in. For them to express praise was considered presumptuous, even insolent. To fidget or change your posture while the *baithak* was in session

was to be strictly followed: no standing, no kneeling and during the performance no personal display of emotion was allowed. A composer who had to conduct his music with his feet was wired up on India, considered unsanitized. Of course one always covered one's feet with and had to be careful not to touch one's leg or point one's feet in the direction of the instruments. In the 1950s, to try to create a style that aspired to simulate the traditional setting in a modern context, one entered the presence of music with respect and trepidation. The musician was not someone who was being paid to deliver what he felt, but a living treasure to be cherished for what he was – a *superstar* being. The musician was the leader and the listener the follower.

These rules have gradually been reversed because the musician must please his new, many-headed patrons if he is to survive professionally. His stature no longer depends on artistic merit. He has to woo the bag, stage and cultivate a winning personality which is in keeping with the public's image of the sensitive artist. He must seem to be super star even if he has not yet made it. He must learn to speak the language of organisers and promoters in addition to the wordless language of music. And most importantly he must make sure that he sells. The challenge to the creativity of today's performing maestro is therefore gigantic. If he values his art above all else, he has no choice but to innovate genuinely and so vigorously that the frontiers of his art stretch to admit the energetic audiences of the new commercial culture. These are some of the pressures on the musician of today which his predecessors did not have to grapple with.

If music concerts are designed for 2000 rather than 200 people, as indeed they should be, the intimacy of the *barruk* has obviously to be sacrificed. The change in the physical scene however presents some unforeseen difficulties which are not physical but have to do with the nature of the music that is being produced and presented. First, the ambience of the large auditorium is radically different from anything the musician's training and discipline have prepared him for. He can no longer find the same kind of inspiration from his distant audience as his guru probably could in old-style recitals by simply looking into the eyes of a listener and expressing what was in his heart. His audience is now no one in particular, just a vast black pit with an unknown animal in it which might roar or pounce, purr or go to sleep. I remember a recent concert of Ustad Bismillah Khan in a large hall where he stopped midway and demanded that all the lights be turned on so that at least he could see who he was playing for. He said he wanted to let his *shehnai* address them directly. Needless to say, there was an immediate thaw in the atmosphere and the music thereafter spiralled to new heights. There are numerous examples where the presence or absence of rapport have made all the difference to the quality of the music at a performance. But the realities of the situation today cannot always accommodate this intrinsic requirement of our music.

ELUSIVE SPONTANEITY

Another intrinsic requirement is spontaneity. This too is less and less in evidence because of time constraints. These foster an element of premeditation which is alien to the nature of Indian music. Some artists go so far as to work out exactly what they will do at a played concert, down to the last detail of rhythmic climaxes, fast runs, and other gems in their repertoire which are guaranteed to dazzle their listeners. This road is yet another departure from the trodden path of genuine improvisation. In my view it is a threat to quality because the genius of Indian music does not lie in this direction but in the opposite one. The nature of Indian music is such that if it is pre-set, however roughly, in the manner of Western classical music, it tends to lose much of its power to infect and persuade, even though it still might fall pleasantly and tunelessly on the ear. In this situation the musician has little chance of being able to *share* his spiritual striving with his listener. And this is what our music is really all about. Everyone agrees with this, including the worst defaulters. Whether or not conditions permit intimate rapport and spontaneity, every performer on stage, radio or television compulsively simulates these characteristics, thereby paying unconscious tribute to these values in our traditional music. Ironically, even the most self-centred audiences are only impressed by the musician who ignores and disregards them because he is completely immersed in his own art.

TYRANNY OF THE MICROPHONE

The advent of the microphone has ushered in another major change. Along with other electronic aids and the mass media, it has extended the reach of both musician and listener. Of course methods of transmission must change if much larger audiences have to be reached, but must the product itself? Although this could not have been the intention, many examples spring to mind where the need to channel music through the microphone has killed many born singers and created many who would otherwise have been only hummers and crooners. The microphone is the new tyrant of the music world. It demands a kind of modulation which is alien to the direct and intimate idiom of Indian music. Not only that: by offering artificially an unaccustomed range of tonal possibilities, it often becomes an invitation to spurious emoting, posturing and striving after sound effects, specially for vocalists.

The saving grace for instrumentalists is that many of them are learning to use the potential provided by electronic amplification in a positive manner. In this they are guided by the extraordinary technological improvements that have taken place in almost all Indian instruments over the last fifty years. It is thrilling to hear clearly the echoes of the softest whisper of a string even after it has stopped vibrating. This was not the case in the instrumental music of even the greatest masters of the 1940s and 1950s. The vast expanse of

musical space audio technology has opened up offers to the creative musician limitless opportunities for experimentation. Many have used it with discrimination, and succeeded in introducing a new sophistication and refinement in the body of the old music. In irresponsible and casual hands however the danger of derailment is also immeasurably greater than it was before. Examples of this are also plentiful. In other words, the microphone like the curate's egg has turned out to be good in parts.

However, the microphone is only a minor player in the field of electronics. The following advertisement I came across recently in a popular magazine is evidence of the explosion that has taken place.

KEEP IN TUNE

Have you nurtured an unfulfilled desire to become a music director? Now here's your chance. The Miracle Piano Teaching System plugs into a Nintendo games machine or on IBM compatible computer and then works as a keyboard synthesizer. It has over 100 'voices' and has a full musical instrument digital interface (MIDI) compatibility so that it can be hooked on to other synthesizers.

The Miracle can also be a fun way to learn and to give lessons.

The second musical marvel is the Yamaha QY10. Smaller than a video cassette, the QY10 is a miniaturized MIDI sequencer. This means it scores MIDI notes and enables you to edit them, allowing you to work on eight compositions at a time. It has 76 pre-set accompaniments and drum patterns. So if music is the essence of life, here's your chance to play on.

The easy and informal language of the insertion suggests that the young music buff at whom it is aimed is not unfamiliar with the possibilities he is being invited to try out. On the other hand, his counterpart in the older generation is not likely to have the least idea what is being talked about. Never have things moved so far so fast. Along with physical and technological changes, the attitudes and awareness of society in general have also undergone a metamorphosis. A prominent signboard I saw on the façade of a small three-room flat at a street corner the other day announcing lessons in 'Western Dance, Guitar, Sitar, Cassio, Kathak, Painting and Folk' is a symptom of this metamorphosis. Such ambitious and confident enterprises are mushrooming all over the big cities. Among other things this tells us that culture has now become big business and that marketing might be a more important component of this business than art. Since this in turn depends on the number of consumers that can be drawn in, the emphasis has increasingly to be on what everybody understands, recognizes, expects and wants. It follows that the lowest common denominator which satisfies the innumerable layers of the new urban and rural clientele will have to determine the nature of the product that is offered. This will automatically eliminate most of the subtleties and refinements.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MEANING

The streams that nourish Indian music include the religious, the folk, the tribal and the courtly. To these, the modern age has added some new ones of its own. This in itself need not cause concern provided the roots remain intact. One area of danger is the growing tendency to concentrate on the physical aspects of sound rather than its meaning. It is an inalienable characteristic of Indian music that the intention of the performer takes precedence over the physical attractiveness of the sound. This is why some of the most sought after musicians have been people in their seventies. This is also why disturbances such as clearing the throat or pauses for re-tuning in the middle of a traditional concert do not detract from the value of the music. So basic is this principle that even the uninitiated Indian ear is conditioned to it. A departure from these priorities could cut off a vital source of life. But there are some hopeful signs. Regardless of their quality, the music videos that are flooding the market all aspire, perhaps unconsciously, to satisfy another central principle of raga, namely the gradual accumulation of musical meaning around a nucleus so as to suffuse the listener. The insistent refrains, the repetitive motif, the pounding rhythms of the videos aim at stimulating the senses into a heightened stage of being much in the same way as happens in *keertan*, *qawwali*, *bhajan* and even *khayal*. At the same time the presentation tends to be theatrical, aggressive and garish in a manner which is inimical to the nature of Indian music as earlier generations understood it.

We are in the centre of a musical transition in which grace and romanticism, purity and restraint, depth and serenity, which still seem to us the most attractive attributes of Indian classical music, are receding. But music is not. Our lives are more full of sound than ever before. But what this really means — we who stand too near the scene cannot judge. It will be many years before we can see the true colour of the changes we are in the midst of.

DEVESH SONEJI

Dance: Revival, Reiteration and Renewal

In the fifty years since India became independent, dance as a form of the performing arts in the country has undergone transformations on several planes, including the social, conceptual, technical and analytical. Globalization, in terms of the diffusion of Indian dance as well as the production of intercultural and trans-cultural choreography, has placed India in a position of importance on the world's dance map. An explosive surge of creative energy has led to explorations of new directions in kinæsthetics, a revival of forgotten forms, erudite dance scholarship and criticism, and systematized pedagogy, which mark the contours of modern India's aesthetic discourse. The last fifty years have witnessed an incredible range of activity in the field of dance, from the high point of the revivalist movement, to the mass popularization and accessibility of forms, to the first abstractions in both form and content, to the development of a markedly 'contemporary' organization of movement.

As we begin to look back on the evolution of Indian dance over the past fifty years, we must take note of the sociological significance of dance in the post-colonial state. The shifts in gender-based and class-based authority, the representation of the body, and the conscious role of the dancer as an agent of social change have become some of the central issues of creative, performing and analysing dance in this country.

The beginnings of what Schechner terms the 'restoration of behaviour' or the revivalist movement can be seen in the well-known contributions of Vallathol, E. Krishna Iyer, Rukmani Devi, Menaka and others. Similarly, the roots of 'new dance' in India can be traced to Rabindranath Tagore who first expressed an interest in taking dance 'forward', and Uday Shanker, whose works such as *Rhythm of Life* (1930s), *Labour and Machinery* (1940s) and *Khada* (1960s) addressed non-traditional themes. In the 1990s Indian dance around the world has taken two noticeably different expressions — that of the 'restored, traditional' form, and that which is based on abstractions of that form.

In post-colonial India, the establishment of large-scale dance academies and the institutionalization of Indian dance in centres such as Shantiniketan, Kerala Kalamandalam, Kalakshetra, Darpana and others created a mass accessibility to art forms which were once open only to the initiated few. The performing arts received considerable government support through the central and state Sangeet Natak Akademis, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations and similar organizations aimed at shaping and defining cultural policy.

Dance history, research and scholarship have been established as constituting a field in their own right. The founding of Departments of Dance at universities like M.S. University (Baroda) and Rabindra Bharati (Calcutta) prompted the establishment of such departments around the country. Veteran historians such as Mohan Khanna, Kapila Vatsyayan, Sanil Kothari and Iliwari Puri have contributed immensely to the available body of literature on Indian dance. Sanskritists such as V. Raghavan, Manmohan Ghosh, S.S. Janaki, R. Sathyanarayana, Mandakranta Bose and several others have extended our knowledge of the Sanskritic dance/drama traditions. Western scholars Fredric Marglin and Saskia Kersenboom are largely responsible for our understanding of ritual dance traditions in Orissa and Tamil Nadu respectively, while Arudra and Swapnasundari have given us deep insights into Andhra traditions. G. Venu, Nirmala Panikkar, Philip Zarilli, Clifford Jones, Kanak Rele and recently P. Ummi and Bruce Sullivan, have contributed to scholarship on Kerala's traditions. North American scholars of religion such as Philip Lutgendorf, Paula Richman, Vasudha Narayanan and others have drawn our attention to the links between ritual, text and performance. Libraries such as the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library (Chennai) and the Tanjavur Sarasvati Mahal Library, for example, have provided us with several 'link texts' in published form. Recent studies on Indian dance by Avanthi Meduri, Uttara Asha Coorlawala, Ananya Chatterjee and Ratna Roy in North America have given us fresh perspectives on dance history and performance analysis.

'TRADITIONAL' FORMS

The term 'traditional' has been used to denote the structures of neo-classical, 'resuscitated' dance forms which were diffused throughout the country following Independence, and which have undergone several changes since then. Hereditary and non-hereditary masters of all forms of dance have taken steps to introduce new compositions into the traditional repertoire, and many have choreographed full-length productions on non-traditional themes. While the lines between traditional form, its contemporary expression and abstractions are becoming increasingly blurred, it is important to look in retrospect at the process of enrichment of this realm.

The revival of forgotten forms since Independence serves as another point of interest. While the period immediately before and after Independence saw a movement to crystallize the techniques of Odissi, Kuchipudi and Mohiniyattam, these were relatively quickly accepted into the fold of 'dance styles' and had the status of 'classical' conferred upon them. Aside from these, however, there have been restorations and recreations of several other dance *genres* in the more recent past. These fall under three categories: (1) lost elements of the repertoires of existing forms; (2) lost forms with distinct histories and repertoires revived with the aid of living informants; (3) reconstructions of forms of which there are no living practitioners, that is subjective

reconstruction and reconstruction of evidence. The first category of additions to repertoire of I. K. K. R. appeared as a result of *the growth and maturation of technique*. Of the Prasad Desai inclusion of *adhar bhagavata* into his repertoire, see C. R. Acharya's reconstruction of *prachin Manipadi* (1994) as a revival of *bhagavata* and other rituals, are significant. Intention of the development of new forms with their own distinct repertoires, the recent revival of various techniques of Chauri, the work of Nataraja Ramakrishna, Aradita and Swamimallari with respect to the dances of the *devadasis* of Andhra and Indira Bora's work on the Vaishnava *sattriya* dances of Assam are important contributions. Under the third category falls Padma Subrahmanyam's expression of 'Bharatanatyam', a subjective recreation of technique described in the *Nattiyasastra*, and the recent reconstruction of **technique from ancient Bengal**.

By the time India had acquired freedom, the term Bharatanatyam had become associated with the dance traditions of the ritual dancers/courtesans of Tamil Nadu. At this time, Meenakshisundaram Pillai and Muthukumar Pillai had both retired. Chokkalingam Pillai was the Principal of the Indian Institute of Fine Arts, Egmore, and a younger generation of masters from the *nat retnana* community and their disciples had come into prominence. The socio-cultural ambience of the post-colonial state facilitated the proliferation of influential teachers and performers. From Balasaraswati and Rukmini Devi to Mrinalini Sarabhai and Yamini Krishnamurti to Sudharani Raghupathy and Chitra Visweswaran to Alamel Valli and Malavika Sarukkai, from Kittappa Pillai and Subbaraya Pillai to Dandayudhapani Pillai and Ramaiah Pillai to I. K. Kalyanasundaram and Swamimalai Rajaratnam and Advyar Lakshman to K. J. Sarasa — Bharatanatyam has emerged as 'the' dance style of India *par excellence*. As Avanthi Meduri has shown, it has played a major role in the development of a national identity for this country. Creative elements in the presentation of Bharatanatyam had manifested themselves before Independence, but in the 1950s and 1960s we saw the frequent exposition of regional languages and sometimes folk dances into the traditional solo repertoire. After Kalakshetra's exposition of Bhagavatamela Nataka and Kuravanji, Bharatanatyam took on a popular dimension as a 'group dance', which proved very useful for those who had set up institutions where large numbers of students had to be showcased at the same time. It is also interesting that Bharatanatyam has given rise to a distinct culture based in politics and group solidarity. There is no doubt that it has become a commodity in the two major centres of its 'production', Chennai and New Delhi, where it serves largely as a social or recreational focal-point for the upwardly mobile middle class.

The neo-classical form known as Odissi was given its present shape only after Independence. As the work of Sunil Kothari and Jiwan Pani has shown us, the principal force in the revivalist movement was that of male dancers trained as performers in the *gotipua* tradition. This list included Pankaj

Charan Das, Deba Prasad Das, Kelucharan Mohapatra, Mayadhar Raut, and Harekrishna Behra among others. Pankaj Charan Das moved forward to ensure the inclusion of the technique of the *muhuri* into the present vocabulary and repertoire, and Dr Charles Fabri sought to have Odissi recognized as a 'classical' form by the Central Sangeet Natak Academy. The pioneering performances of this 'new art' by Priyambada Mohanty, Indrani Rehman and Sanjukta Panigrahi, in the early 1950s and 1960s brought about a renewed interest in both the music and dance of Orissa. Since then, Odissi has seen a significant development in solo repertoire, and largely due to the efforts of Kelucharan Mohapatra it has taken on group expression as well. His first group piece *Konar Purnima* (1956) inspired the group expression of Odissi, which was later taken up by other masters and younger dancers.

There has been a surge in the popularity of Kerala's dance systems since Independence. The Kutiyattam tradition, especially the hereditary technique of Ammanur Madhava Chakyar, has been carefully documented and given a profile at the national and international levels. Similarly, the technique of Nangiar Kuttu has also been rescued from oblivion. Krsnattam and Ramanattam have also come out of the ritual contexts in which they existed, and are occasionally performed on the proscenium. Kathakali has emerged as the most 'popular' dance technique of Kerala, while the knowledge of the martial Kalari has become a sort of fad among 'contemporary' choreographers. Also in Kerala, Mohiniyattam was resuscitated by the efforts of Vallathol and Mukundaraja at Kerala Kalamandalam. They brought a woman dancer from the *tevadi* tradition, Kalyani Amma, to teach classes at the institution and several noted upper-class women began to learn the technique. In the recent past, Kanak Rele and Bharati Shivaji have furthered our understanding of the art. Both have also created new compositions in both solo and group dimensions that have extended the repertoire and to some degree the technique of Mohiniyattam.

The Katthak form which had received considerable attention in the West due to the efforts of the Denishawns, was popularized as 'a respectable art' by Menaka (Leela Sokhey) prior to Independence. In the post-Independence era, four major traditions of Katthak find expression as components of the neo-classical dance style, namely, Lucknow, Jaipur, Jankiprasad and Raigarh. The most prolific is the Lucknow *gharana*, whose present torch-bearer, Birju Maharaj, is responsible for much of what we see as 'modern' Katthak today. However, the recent contributions by the late Pandit Durgalal of the Jaipur *gharana*, Krishna Kumar of the Jankiprasad *gharana*, and Pandit Kartikram of Raigarh, were equally significant. Performers such as Sitara Devi, Kumudini Lakhia, Damayanti Joshi, Uma Sharma, Rani Karna, Saswati Sen and others have become sources of inspiration to younger artists across India. While the tradition of group presentation of narratives was a part of the Katthak repertoire since the time of Wajid Ali Shah, it was given a new dimension in the modern era by Menaka and later by Birju Maharaj's

adaptation of Shree Ch. Menon's *Kathak Al Karani* (1951). This piece provided stimulus for the popularity of Kathak presented by institutes such as the Shree Ram Theatre, Kanchi Kooda and Kailash Kendra of New Delhi.

M Manipuri had been revived by the efforts of Rabindranath Tagore well before Independence. Around the time of Independence, Bhabu Singh's historic presentation of Manipuri in Mumbai in 1945 lead to the popularization of the technique. The most significant contributions to the field have come from the Jhaveri sisters (Nirvana, Rajana, Suvarna and Darshana), who spread the technique beyond the borders of India. While the various forms of Manipuri have become revitalized through the efforts of various masters in the fields of *kathak*, *chhau*, *maria*, *ai baroma*, *nasa* and *ping chom*, they have not grown in popularity to the extent that Bharatanatyam, Odissi, Kathak and Kathakali have.

Andhra presents a complex, multilayered and multidimensional dance tradition whose various forms are currently emerging as individual techniques. In the late 1950s Indrani Rehman learnt a technique which was loosely called Kuchipudi from Korada Narasimha Rao, a disciple of C.R. Acharyalu. She was the first to take this technique outside India. Her performances sparked a sudden interest in the dance forms of Andhra, and a small village in the Krishna district became the focus of national attention. Vedantam Lakshminarayana Sastri, a Brahmin *bhagavata* from the village, taught several dancers from outside Andhra, and Kuchipudi emerged as a recognized 'classical style'. However, even before Indrani's performances, both hereditary and non-hereditary practitioners such as C.R. Acharyalu and Vempati Chinna Satyam had studied the technique. In the post-Independence era, the older, more earthy technique of the dance has been retained by C.R. Acharyalu, while Vempati Chinna Satyam, based in Chennai, has significantly altered and further geometrized the technique. Mass accessibility to Kuchipudi has been brought about largely by Chinna Satyam's students, many of whom are Bharatanatyam artists who wish to 'learn something different'. Indeed, his students including Shobha Naidu, Bala and M.V.N. Murthy have contributed to the popularization of his technique. The more earthy, holistic technique of C.R. Acharyalu has been propagated by Malika Sarabhai, Korada Narasimha Rao, and V. Rangamani. However, besides the technique of the Kuchipudi village crystallized by Lakshminarayana Sastri, several other narrative dance-theatre traditions (*bhagavatams*) also exist. Sunil Kothari's documentation of Kurchela Brahmananda Bhagavata's technique stands as an example. In this decade, we have also seen renewed interest in the dance traditions of the *sanulu* (*devadasis*) of coastal Andhra. Initially studied by Nataraja Ramakrishna who in the 1960s and 1970s revived the lengthy narrative tradition of *Navajanardanam*, the technique has found further expression in the careful hands of Swapnasundari and Arudra. Swapnasundari has carefully studied the ritual (*alayanrtya*), secular (*mejuvani*) and narrative (*bhagavatam*) traditions, and performs them with unprecedented levels of understanding and authenticity. It is to be seen whether

this form will attain the same levels of popularity as the Kuchipudi technique, and whether it will be able to resist the power of commercialization which has, in such a short period of time, eaten away at Kuchipudi.

The post-Independence era has also seen a resurgence in interest in forms such as Yaksagana Bayalata and Chau. Kota Shivram Karanth's persistent scholarship as well as active participation have led to the proliferation of Yaksagana Bayalata within Karnataka, and similarly Prince Suddhendra, Krishna Chandra Naik and others have guided the path toward the institutionalization of various techniques of Chau.

ABSTRACTIONS

The term 'abstractions' here refers to the cognizant distillation, reconfiguration or fragmentation of traditional form. Taking technique (usually but not always *nrtta*) as a point of departure, 'abstractions' often lead to the development of distinct vocabularies of movement or unique styles of presentation. Interestingly, this concept was only truly established in India after independence, when trained performers felt a need to expand the scope of the content or form of their work.

The first conscious abstraction based on traditional form and verily the contemporary Indian dance aesthetic itself was established by Mrinalini Sarabhai. Two years after Independence, in 1949, Sarabhai extended the vision of dance-art in India through her pathfinding choreography of *Manushya*. This piece was significant for several reasons: (1) it was the first departure from the structures of traditional movement by a classical soloist; (2) it was the first piece to employ Indian technique as a 'vehicle' for universal communication; (3) it sparked the movement toward 'choreography' (in the global sense) in the Indian context. Sarabhai's *Manushya* which re-evaluated Kathakali movement, was followed by three other significant pieces, *Maya and the Disciple* (1954), *Memory is a Ragged Fragment of Eternity* (1961) and *Rig Veda* (1961). In *Maya and the Disciple*, Sarabhai visualized in movement esoteric concepts of the Tantrik/Saktadvaita traditions. The piece created a unique awareness among the dance community, — it was the first to translate deeply cerebral, psycho-spiritual concepts into physical movement. In terms of technique, it utilized a vocabulary drawn from an organic amalgam of Bharatanatyam and Kathakali. *Memory is a Ragged Fragment of Eternity* was based on abstractions from the Bharatanatyam technique and was the forerunner of the genre known as 'issue-based choreography' in India. It addressed issues of patriarchy and the objectification of women in both rural and urban India. Like *Manushya*, it too utilized recognizably 'modern' movements, yet balanced the stunning dichotomy between the resistance of creative movement and the flow of Bharatanatyam. It was also the first time that the *solukattus* (vocalized rhythms) of Bharatanatyam were taken out of the sphere of *nrtta* and utilized for narrative purposes, replete with the enhancement of their tonal qualities by

techniques of voice modulation. *Rig Veda* not only cast aside text, but was also the first Indian choreography performed entirely in silence. Sarabhai's later choreographies such as those of *Chandalika* (1977), *Surya* (1981) and *Ganga* (1985) provided considerable impetus for interest in developing a modern/post-modern dance scene in India. Her work has established that dance in India can transcend realism and the textual condition.

The mid-1970s also saw the first abstractions based on Katthak technique by Kumudini Lakhia. She not only explored new content, but new form as well. Her pieces such as *Dhabkar/Pulses*, *Atah Kim*, *Dvidha*, *The Coat* and others have contributed significantly to an awareness of the potential applicability and abstract quality of Katthak technique. Lakhia has created choreographies which explore simply the aesthetics of 'new dance' such as *Dhabkar/Pulses*, those which explore a particular concept in a non-linear manner such as *Atah Kim*, and those which contain a linear narrative such as *Dvidha*. Lakhia's early work also provided the stimulus for her students such as Daksha Sheth, Aditi Mangaldas, and Maulik Shah/Ishira Parikh to continue explorations into abstractions of Katthak technique.

Manjusri-Chaki Sircar and Ranjabati Sircar have also made significant contributions to 'new dance'. Manjusri-Chaki Sircar's choreography of *Tomari Matir Kanya* (1987) is perhaps best representative of her approach. Heavily rooted in Tagore's aesthetic, Sircar employs his literary works as the textual basis and his paintings as the visual basis of her choreography. Sircar's movement draws from a variety of sources, including Bharatanatyam, Odissi, Manipuri, Chau, Kalarī and *bhathayoga*. *Tomari Matir Kanya* reinterprets Tagore's *Chandalika* from an eco-feminist perspective. Inspired by Tantrik imagery, Sircar examines the representation of the female body and the *jouissance* of female sexuality. The cerebral, almost academic element in Sircar's work is what distinguishes it from others. Sircar's daughter Ranjabati's creations such as *Gangavartarana*, *A Tale of Grand Subana* and *Night Dream* reflect an intuitive originality, and examine the potential for solo representations of 'new dance' in India. Ranjabati Sircar's recently published paper 'Points of Departure: Contemporary Indian Dance' is a valuable document which presents brilliant models for the analysis of new dance in India.

The image of the dancer as an agent of social change is nowhere better exemplified than in the person of Mallika Sarabhai. Inspired by her mother's pioneering work in issue-based choreography, Sarabhai's earliest choreography of *Shakti* (1989) was the first in India to address a feminist ethic. Sarabhai's subsequent pieces have reflected an integrated exploration of various media in addition to dance — theatre, mime, music, puppetry, video and others. Her approach is one in which the dynamism of music and dance combines with text in the creation of an 'aesthetic of social/political discourse'. Her new aesthetic is defined by an eclectic blend of traditional and creative movement, parody, images of pop culture, *rasa* theory, Indian mythology, and above all a solemn representation of the 'sexual-textual politics' of the body and society.

She is also one of the few artists who work in contemporary media without 'rejecting' the execution of traditional form. Her work can be analysed using a four-fold paradigm: (1) work which explores new directions in kinaesthetics — traditional, 'contemporary' and intercultural, *Jazz Tillana* (1993), *Tattu-kazhi* (1993); (2) choreography involving single-strand narratives, *Ivan Karam* (1990), *Mean Streets on Earth* (1993); (3) issue-based choreography involving multiple narratives and media, *Sita's Daughters* (1990), *V For . . .* (1996); (4) non-linear, concept-centred choreography, *World Within and Without* (1995) and *Ceremony I* (1995). From a thematic or conceptual perspective, her work has addressed *issues* such as the objectification of women, sectarian violence, violence as social 'perpetuator', and *concepts* such as female sexuality, ritual and rites of passage. Sarabhai's choreographies have shown that dance in India can enhance and enrich not only our aesthetic urges but also alter our social and psychological landscape.

Astad Daboo, one of India's few Modern Dancers, employs an amalgam of Indian technique, largely based in Kathakali, and Modern Dance. Daboo is also one of the rare contemporary 'urban performance artists'. The content of his choreography lies in the 'here-and-now' and speaks volumes in a rapidly modernizing urban India. One of the pioneers of what is called 'fusion' choreography in the South Asian diaspora, Daboo's major contribution is awareness of the modern/post-modern condition, which his work creates among its audiences.

Chandralekha's choreography has radically altered the world's vision of Indian dance. Her 'rebirth' in 1985 with the creation of *Angika* sparked a series of subsequent landmark choreographies in the history of 'new' Indian dance. Her style was not, as one may expect, culled from sources outside the Indian cultural context, but rather from the deeply-grounded *nrtta* of Bharatanatyam, the disciplined, martial Kalari and the psycho-spiritual *bhathayoga*. Her artistry looks inward, only to unleash an outward flow of energy. Among her most significant contributions are *Lilavati*, a dissection of Bhaskaracarya's mathematical formulae; *Sri*, an exploration of images of women; and *Yantra/Dance Diagrams*, abstractions based on the descriptions of the *srucakra* in the *Saundaryalahari*. In all three works Chandralekha creates a dynamic interaction between the forces of tension and relaxation, and this is the energy which holds her work together. Her major contribution lies in her renewed focus on the minimalist element in Indian dance. Her work addresses the intellectual, social and aesthetic levels of discourse in India. In some ways, it is a genre unto itself. It represents a seemingly 'new' approach to understanding the body and its relation to structures of movements, but as she has often explained it is inspired by spatial concepts that are very much a part of the Indian aesthetic ethos.

Daksha Sheth too, represents the emerging cutting-edge of the post-modern dance culture of India. Her two most significant works, *Yajna* (1992) and *Sarpagati* (1996), reflect new directions in kinaesthetics. *Yajna*, a work

which has seen three generations of artists in primal Vedic times, and is an integrated exploration of physical, emotional and cognitive movement. Such an approach is not new, it has been used and developed in a truly organic manner. It draws largely from the classical Bharata, but is intensely 'whole' in terms of the organization of 'eyes and all of the body'. *Sarpagata*, based on the Tantrik visions of *Shakti* and the folk traditions of popular snake worship, is an incredibly focused choreography in which the organization of bodies in space produces resonant images. Such a work, like that of Chandrasekhar, has shown a balance in the individual/group, motion/stillness, negative/positive binaries.

Many choreographers have created 'abstract' pieces centred very much in traditional mythology and naturalism. A case in point is a recent work by Anita Ratnam (*Gangamma* 1996) is an expression of the visual imagery connected to the icon of Ganesha, but interpreted through abstractions based in Bharatanatyam. The piece has a distinctly 'contemporary' feel, though the representation of its content is very familiar in the idiom of dance. Choreographies such as Ratnam's reveal the modern Indian artist's need to express all realms of experience in a variety of ways, including the abstract. Perhaps 'contemporary Indian dance' is not just a fad of the post-modern era, but a true response to the need for the enhancement and advancement of communicative arts.

As we move into another fifty years of dance-as-art in this country, we must reevaluate the approaches we have taken in the past five decades. The holistic, body-centred art of movements which has played a vital role in communications, ritual and divertissement must be documented, analysed, and performed and retained in its uncorrupted forms. Simultaneously, the conscious inclination to expand the aesthetic and social significance of movement in our country must also continue. It is wrong to say that we are at the crossroads, for expansion continues in both directions, but the directions are not necessarily divergent. While the plastic commercialism of 'neo-classical' forms is obvious, the discipline, structure and traditional repertoires must remain intact. Similarly, new dance must steer away from a simple aping of Western Modern Dance. The directions that dance will take in the next fifty years will be even more exciting as the processes of reiteration and renewal find articulation in the hands of dance artists across India.

RANJIT HOSKOTE

Art: From Enchantment to Interrogation

All nations invent themselves, and post-colonial nations do so to a greater degree, perhaps, than others.¹ In the celebrated speech that he made at midnight on 15 August 1947, Jawaharlal Nehru announced the subcontinent's awakening to 'light and freedom' after nearly two centuries of British colonial domination. To the revolutionary imagination, as to the artistic one, the romantic myths of light and language are crucial: liberation comes as the recovery of one's ability to speak after an epoch of silence or imitative helotry; and modernity appears in the aspect of an illumination after a long night of struggle.

'Some moment comes, which comes but rarely in history,' proclaimed the first prime minister of independent India, 'when we step out from the old to the new, when an age ends, and when the soul of a nation, long suppressed, finds utterance.' And indeed, this Nehruvian rhetoric precisely expressed the popular mood of the time. It would seem that we cannot now respond to the dramatic sonority and solemn grace of that rhetoric without a touch of irony, but the Nehruvian key certainly touched off an arpeggio of corresponding emotions across all classes and regions in the India of the 1950s.

A consensus on national destiny had, apparently, been forged through poetic means; enchanted and enchanting, Nehru had given his people a story which seemed to them to capture the essential truth of their lives, and to convey a blood-quickenning sense of what was to come.

Sudipta Kaviraj, in treating of such manoeuvres, observes: 'The nationalist storyteller confers the bounty of the story on the elect, those who are rendered eligible by the conventions of the story. Nationalism clearly uses the contractual character of the narrative to extend its ideological message. Across segments of society, across generations, across all political divides it creates a vast, constantly open and constantly renewed political contract.'²

The Nehruvian contract of consensus was to endure for the seventeen years of the first premier's reign; since his death in 1964, however, it has become increasingly strained and untenable, a brittle relic of more confident times. The cynical exigencies of government have long displaced the poetry and prophecy of narrative. The Partition of the subcontinent — the dark twin phenomenon to Independence which was also born on that fateful midnight — has, moreover, mutilated strongly against Nehru's vision. Over half a century of freedom, it has multiplied into a range of contentious issues

involving the inequitable distribution of power and value, the vexed questions of ethnicity and economic interest, the marginalization of groups and the destruction of identities.

Manichaeic as this account may seem, it is certainly true that nationalist rhetoric and the pulse of popular feeling are now so at odds that the nation-state has become less a unitary entity and more a coercive force attempting to hold together a fragmentary protocol of dissensions. A parallel movement from consensus to dissensus is evident in the history of post-colonial Indian art; the situation is best portrayed in Clement Greenberg's pronouncement: 'A society, as it becomes less and less able, in the course of its development, to justify the inevitability of its forms, breaks up the accepted notions upon which artists and writers must depend in large part for communication with their audiences. It becomes difficult to assume anything. All the verities involved by religion, authority, tradition, style are thrown into question, and the writer or artist is no longer able to estimate the response of his audience to the symbols and references with which he works.'

SHIFTS OF STYLE AND DIRECTION

The fiftieth anniversary of India's independence gives us, therefore, a determinate point of vantage from which to survey the progression of post-colonial Indian art: like the Indian nation-state, contemporary Indian art has had its shifts of style and direction, its forced marches and *volte faces* of formal concern and thematic commitment, its moments of defeatist lethargy and passages of wry enlightenment.

In art, too, the mandarinate that determine the dominant rhetoric continue to contemplate such moribund issues as a native artistic identity, the nostalgic evocation of a national culture that was hospitable to the artist, the securing of the artist's freedom from the raw forces of the market. Outside the ivory tower that this establishment occupies, artists continue to articulate themselves through a marvellous display of experimentalism, hybridity and autonomy from doctrine.

With the advantage of distance in time, it can now be argued that there do exist at least three generations of post-colonial artists at work in India today. The first of these (represented by M.F. Husain, F.N. Souza, S.H. Raza, Jhangir Sabavala, Ram Kumar, Akbar Padamsee, Tyeb Mehta, Krishen Khanna, among others) was born during the period of high imperialism, while the second generation (represented by Jogen Chowdhury, Bhupen Khakhar, Gieve Patel, Sudhir Parwardhan, Vivan Sundaram, Gulammohamed Sheikh, Nalini Malani, among others) was born, for the most part, when the shadows of twilight had already begun to fall across the British empire.

In contradistinction, it is the third generation which most truly embodies the post-colonial culture of the moment, most of its members having been born during the 1950s and 1960s — that is, in a free state. If the first two

generations may be described as *Midnight's Parents and Children* (to extend, and even stretch Salman Rushdie's vivid metaphor), the third may be spoken of as *Midnight's Grandchildren*.

The worldview of this third generation has been shaped by such events as the brief internal Emergency declared in the mid-1970s (a bitter experience of authoritarian governance imposed on a stubbornly democratic environment) and the economic liberalization of the country, a process of opening-up inaugurated during the 1980s (one that is not unattended by various modes of cultural unzipping as well).

The mental world of this generation is dominated by the discourse of what Jacques Lang has famously described as 'cultural imperialism'; as the nation-state gives in to its various, fissuring discontents, many of its citizens turn increasingly to the 'information state' that extends through the virtuality of communication lines — across airspace and cyberspace — and transgresses the individual and national boundaries laid down by conventions of sovereignty. In this post-modern social climate, the contested definition and re-definition of 'Indian culture' has taken on a new and poignant urgency.

In order to describe the trajectory of Indian art as it makes a transition from modernist to post-modernist image-making practices, we would have to trace the shift from the ideological and formal positions evolved by the first two generations of post-colonial artists, to those positions that are being constructed by younger contemporary artists like Amitava Das, Atul Dodiya, G. Ravinder Reddy, Ranbir Singh Kaleka, Arpana Caur, among others.

The use of the term 'generation' might seem somewhat misleading here: while it does indeed bear a chronological significance, as a benchmark of sorts, it is used, not to indicate that all the members of a given group were necessarily coeval, but rather, to signify a configuration of artists united by their commonality of purpose and vision.

THE DELIRIUM OF LIBERATION

The story of contemporary Indian art should begin, correctly speaking, in the middle of the eighteenth century. In the context of colonial India (1757–1947), the experience of modernity had meant both the delirium of liberation from the oppressiveness of feudal culture and the vertigo of lost bearings, as the relative certitudes of agrarian-mercantile tradition were displaced by the turbulences of an incipient capitalism. Even as it created islands of metropolitan privilege in an ocean of rural shanties, modernity generated a crisis of conviction: in the turmoil and unease that resulted, a new spiritual and geographical homelessness became pervasive, and was only exacerbated in 1947, when independence dawned over the splintered nation-states of the Indian subcontinent.

Not unnaturally, such a situation brought conflicting impulses to bear upon the artistic sensibility. The most important of these conflicting impulses,

in the first half of the twentieth century, was cultural nationalism. It took the form of a commitment to a modern but resolutely nativist or pan-Asian Indian art among the Bengal School, that aristocratic circle of aesthetes around the Tagores of Jorasanko and Santiniketan, who drew inspiration from such sources as the Ajanta murals, the Mughal miniatures and the Tang scrolls.

Under the influence of Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and F.B. Havell, the artist and theorist Abanindranath Tagore came also to regard the folk arts and village crafts as the finest repositories of Indian tradition. Infused with national pride, the proponents of the Coomaraswamy-Havell-Tagore school made a concerted effort to organize an indigenous response to the challenge of Western academicism. It was based, as Tapati Guha-Thakurta notes, on 'a conscious attempt to appropriate the "popular", in a sanitised, idealized form, within the scope of the reconstructed tradition — to create for Indian art both the legacy of a "classical" past and the pride of an uncorrupted "living tradition"'.³

This attempt was to be echoed, decades afterwards, in the art and thought of such individuals as J. Swaminathan and K.G. Subramanyan; but the Bengal School itself became mired in the treatment of *bhava*, or feeling. Unfortunately, as Partha Mitter points out, Abanindranath Tagore came to regard this cornerstone of traditional Sanskrit aesthetics as the acme of artistic fulfilment: in his system, it 'came to stand for the sentimental, the elegiac and the melancholic'.⁵

By the 1940s, these options were already played out. As I have observed elsewhere, the cultural nationalism which was the Bengal School's founding motive had faded: 'beginning as the political will to recreate a consciousness thought dead, it was no more than the forging (in every sense) of a sensibility yet unborn, a pastward flight that took an imagined antiquity as its guide to a confident future'.⁶

Artistic dissatisfaction with this effete perspective erupted from within as well as from without the magic circle. Rebelling against Abanindranath's mood of 'Indic twilight' several proto-modernist threshold figures set out to explore uncharted realities: Rabindranath Tagore plumbed the psychic depths to produce remarkable works of anarchic reverie; Amrita Shergil and Binode Behari Mukherjee, variously, brought a pastoral romanticism to bear on the rituals and labours of life in the village; Jamini Roy accepted the iconography of the earthy folk *pata-chitra* as his thread into the labyrinth of popular culture.

In the first two decades of independence, these transitional concerns fed into the work of artists who were in open confrontation with the sensibilities of an audience raised on the discreet, if banal, conventions of academic art.

This audience was outraged by Francis Newton Souza's parade of kings, priests and tycoons — warped, poisoned hierarchs who nevertheless retained a satanic dignity. While the anguished Souza virulently satirised the debased creatures of intrigue and lust that the new order had thrown up, Padamsee lifted the fugitive, de-valorized human out of the flux of history and turned

him into an icon, his statuesque prophets arrived in mystery and radiance from another world.

In more playful vein, Husain incarnated a flight into idyllic folk romanticism, conveyed through his pacans to robust earth goddesses wrestling with phallic horses; his colleague, Mohan Samant, created assemblages in which painting, sculpture and found object came together under the direction of a barbaric, primitive force — the force of the archaic self in rebellion against the abstract departures of a more sophisticated identity.

Simultaneously, Indian viewers came to understand the burden of urban anxiety which inspired Ram Kumar's tragic allegories, his paintings inhabited by melancholy clerks and bewildered workers turned into pawns and tramps wandering through an industrial terrain. Or they could turn from these bleak intimations to the idealist Jehangir Sabavala's vast landscapes, in which the scarred horizons were lit by a cloudy incandescence, suffused with the glow of the numinous.

With newly emancipated eyes, also, the Indians of the 1950s and 1960s followed Krishen Khanna as he travelled from his examination of the murky political sphere to the throbbing expectancy which distinguished his tableaux of musicians and of apostles. They were also moved by Tyeb Mehta's obsessive studies of the trussed and dying animal, his dethroned human figure, trapped in the abyss of free fall.

Many, though not all, of these painters and sculptors were associated with the Silpi Chakra Group, which had been active in New Delhi even before Independence, and the Progressive Artists Group, which was founded in Bombay in 1948. Most of them had also spent — or went on to spend — a considerable period of time in Europe or America, serving an apprenticeship to the Western tradition and honing their skills. Unconstrained by a definite programme, these artists alternated between history and myth, combative extroversion and mystical introspection.

This early Indian modernist position drew, therefore, upon a dual tension: while driven by the ideological compulsions engendered by modernity in its particular Indian social and economic form, it was also conditioned by the desire to appropriate the High Modernist aesthetic as it became available to Indian artists from exemplars in Paris, London, New York and Munich.

Even as they mediated the influence of Euro-American Modernism, then, these artists had also to negotiate with the more immediate pressures of the post-colonial quest for a national identity. How were they to modulate the compulsions of ideology with the dictates of the imagination? How could they achieve a reconciliation between their ambitions and the various syndromes of hesitancy, inferiority and prickly sensitivity that their situation as post-colonial subjects inflicted upon them? Such was the dilemma of the modernism that arose in a specifically Indian setting.

Their peculiar cultural position exposed these artists to charges of elitism and 'Westernism': they remained harried by the problem of address and

audience. What art and community were they reaching out to? What intervention, if any, were they bringing in that arena of human interplay, the public sphere?

Several decades later, Ganga Kripur phrases their crisis of self-confidence in terms suggestive of the 'phantom manifesto' that they never wrote (and we may visualize Ganga Kripur looking over her shoulder). 'Authenticity, then, will include not only subjective sincerity but also social significance; it will include aesthetic sensibility as well as retrospective contemplation upon the self and the world manifest in the work of art. Such an art would have the potential, at least, of becoming a cultural symbol, a symbol for a living community.'

Formally, the Indian modernist proceeded from an expressionist base: the predominant idioms were the iconic single image, the mythic narrative, the national allegory. The Indian modernist's instinct was conservative: he heavily emphasized the compositional purity of the image as a weighted bearer of meaning, as a detail displaced from history but condensing in its novel gestures the residues of numerous periods, styles and propensities.

In ideological terms, Indian modernism at this stage remained preoccupied with the construction of a viable national aesthetic, the utopian (and indeed, hopelessly romantic) themes of a unique civilizational identity to be expressed through the pictorial image. Internationalist though they were, the first generation of post-colonial Indian artists remained passionately anchored in the quest for an indigenist aesthetic. This quest often meant that their idioms — the heroic icon, the mythic narrative, the potent national allegory — lost the emancipatory and transfigurative vigour of their intention and acquired, in its place, the mannered stylization and stiff elegance of hieratic classicism.

AVANT-GARDE CHALLENGERS

The great indigenist debate has now dwindled away, partly through internal exhaustion and fossilisation into dogma, but largely also because of the radical changes that have been calibrated both over history and art history since the 1950s. As the first generation of post-colonial artists settled into a definitive aesthetic language — more bluntly, into a complacent mastery over a limited repertoire of signs — its ascendancy was challenged by the succeeding generation in several overlapping yet distinctive *avant-gardiste* movements.

These challengers of the orthodox paradigm included at least four major groups: the artists who formed around J. Swaminathan's Group 1890; the artists who clustered around K.C.S. Paniker at Cholamandal; the abstractionists and neo-Tantricians; and the group of painters and writers loosely centred around the nucleus of the Fine Arts faculty at the Maharaja Sayaji University, Baroda.

Through a grid of ultimately interlocking arguments, these groups proposed a trenchant critique of the Progressives and their contemporaries, an

engagement with art from an alternative subjectivity and historical logic, leading to nothing less than the emergence of alternative modernisms.

For J. Swaminathan, a truly contemporary Indian art could develop only if it broke through the metropolitan barriers of art school and gallery, and immersed itself in the resources of folk and tribal art. Swaminathan held that it was only by drawing upon the magical potency and regenerative mystery of these elemental images that the modern Indian artist could redeem himself or herself from alienation, deepen his or her experience of the lived environment.

One of Swaminathan's most abiding and memorable literary images is that of the first artist-magician standing before the sun, symbolic of the numinous aura of ancestral memory: the oracular influence of Barnett Newman and Mark Rothko is clearly at work in the heroic conception of the primitive, the primordial and the sublime which informs this perspective.

In one of the many cross-fertilizations that attend the progress of contemporary Indian art, the fiery Swaminathan functioned under the sign of the considerably more gentle Abanindranath; the style of disruptive syncopation and surrealist anarchy that he inaugurated, later veined with the energies of eroticism, has come to fruition in the work of Manjit Bawa, Jeram Patel, Himmat Shah, Laxman Goud and Mrinalini Mukherjee.

The abstractionists and neo-Tantricians (who included V.S. Gaitonde, Nasreen Mohamedi, Laxman Shreshtha, Biren De, Ghulam Rasool Santosh and Raza in his post-progressive phase) similarly sought a model of liberation from the onus of description and ideology. They found it in the sacred diagrams of the heterodox cults of Tantra, the free play of calligraphic forms, the austere purity of line and the sensuous, even rhapsodic expressiveness of colour divorced from objective meaning. These preoccupations have reached their optimal, masterly zenith in the volatile hieroglyphics of Prabhakar Korte and the taut compositions of Mehlii Gobhai, which resonate around a submerged motif.

A similar lyricism also informed the art of K.C.S. Paniker, who ironized it by recourse of graffiti-like markings, mock-ritual formulae and quasi-scientific notations entered on a palimpsest-like picture surface. Paniker's interrogations of the past were aimed, like Prabhakar Barwe's quite distinct surrealist evocations of the landscape as a museum of dying ideas, at demarcating a terrain where the twentieth-century Indian artist could confront his mixed heritage, engage it in fruitful encounter.

The fourth of the *avant-gardiste* tendencies under review here — commonly though somewhat inaccurately described as 'the Baroda group' — was pioneered by Gulammohamed Sheikh (who had been a member of Swaminathan's Group 1890), Bhupen Khakhar, Vivan Sundaram and Nalini Malani, dissidents who rejected what they perceived as the limited and vacuous transcendentalism, the artistic failure of nerve of their predecessors. Propelling themselves away from the grand fictions of indigenist symbology and abstract idealism, they asserted their desire to engage with the immediate

realities of their society — and in the case of such wizards of Pop Art and Neo-Dada as David Lauder and R. Schickel, Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns, they insisted on pointing the local and autobiographical gestures, as a private sphere of emotion approached through satirical fables and crafty parables.

In accentuating a provisional locality — the sense of a particular place that can have the less art a freight of emotional and ideological associations which link it to the wider world — these artists expanded the space of art to include a dimension of dialogue and with its nuances of solitude, terror, nostalgia and intimacy, the recognition of the unique human (as against superhuman) presence as the first step towards the revolutionary transformation of the world, a secular redemption.

It is in the art of Gieve Paley and Sudhir Patwardhan — who branched off from the 'Baroda group' during the 1980s — that the affirmation of the human predicament reaches its fierce zenith. To paint the human being — with all its vulnerability, confusion and determination (to survive) implies an empathy and an ethical responsibility towards the subject of representation. Similarly, to paint a particular territory — recording its transition (and one's own) across a period of tumultuous personal and historical change — is to approach the landscape with participatory and loving attention rather than an exploitative conquistadorial ambition.

This is how, as they painted auto-rickshaw drivers and workers, railway porters and fisherwomen — immortalizing their resilience without romanticizing their tragedy — this constellation of artists opened up for themselves a possibility of social and political action. By a parallel route, and through an inheritance distinct from that of the 'Baroda group', Bikash Bhattacharjee and Jogen Chowdhury, Asmita Singh and Anupam Sud also arrived at a figurative idiom in which the human figure held out the gifts of surreal satire, erotic vigour or simply a riddle-like unease.

Under the influence of the artist and teacher K.G. Subramanyan (whose background and sensibility relate him strongly to Santiniketan, the legendary academy of the arts associated with the Tagorean renaissance), the 'Baroda group' also acquired a respect for unorthodox methods and materials, especially those employed by 'traditional' artisans and the purveyors of bazaar kitsch. This particular attitude has been transmitted to the next generation of artists — in conjunction with J. Swaminathan's denunciation of the unequal and hierarchical distinction between artists and craftspersons made by bourgeois taste — and manifests itself through the extension of the range of skills now available to the metropolitan practitioner of High Art.

ART IN A TIME OF UPHEAVALS

The third generation of post-colonial Indian artists have no direct experience of colonialism whatever. Many of them profess a post-modernist orientation and do not exhibit the slightest trace of that apologetic guilt — at being

artists rather than 'nation-builders' — which haunted their precursors. Having recovered for themselves a conquistadorial confidence in relation to the archive of the world's cultural heritage, the ROM database that is all antecedent history, these painters, sculptors and installators would have no hesitation in endorsing the new internationalism that Salman Rushdie outlines in his essay, 'Imaginary Homelands': 'Art is a passion of the mind. And the imagination works best when it is most free. Western writers have always felt free to be eclectic in their selection of theme, setting, form. Western visual artists have, in this century, been happily raiding the visual storehouses of Africa, Asia, the Philippines. I am sure that we must grant ourselves an equal freedom.'⁸

It is this internationalism which enables them to survive and flourish in a time of upheaval. It allows them to tap into the 'information state' and subvert the cultural imperialism that the global market order has insinuated into India; it imparts to them the dexterity and finesse required to make their way across a consumerist pattern of patronage and yet savour the possibilities of cultural renewal.

These are the instincts that equip them to carve out interstitial spaces in an age bedevilled by internecine power struggles, low-intensity warfare and collapsing infrastructures: a period in which the polity has been transmogrified into a pathology. This predicament is best described by the urban sociologist Paul Virilio,⁹ who notes that our lives are increasingly premised on the primacy of speed, instant communication and distant reach; emergency and mounting crisis are our constant conditions as a society, and our acts are phrased against a corrosive and self-destructive insecurity.

These artists emerge from, and circulate among, various centres: Bombay, Baroda, Calcutta, Madras, New Delhi, Lucknow, Visakhapatnam. Recognizing their cultural identity to be unstable and in flux, they are almost prodigally experimental in the formal languages they adopt. Practising a diversity of idioms, they are markedly multi-disciplinary in propensity; often, they abandon the painters's frame altogether, to express themselves through the assemblage and the installation.

While applying themselves to graphics, mixed-media assemblages and installations, they also register inventive departures from the more traditional genres of abstractionism, narrative painting and sculpture. As against the compositional bias of their predecessors, their preference is for the risky procedures of improvisation. This choice is not without its own dangers: if the composition suffered from the innate peril of the formula, the improvisation often flattens out into the high finish of the designed image, a seductive mail-order suggestion gleaned from the generic glossaries that are presented through exhibition catalogues emanating from New York and Venice, Paris and Kassel.

Mediating history through the exhibition space, these younger artists borrow audaciously, though often uncritically, from the conceptual models

of contemporary Western practice: they have adopted an array of montage techniques to address the bewildering array of choices offered by contemporary experience. Bizarre as their altered conceptions of space and context may seem to viewers habituated to an earlier and more reassuring style of painting, these are signs of a nascent aesthetic, one that must invent new modes of editing a cosmopolitan reality. In this existential jigsaw, the television image and the splattering of rain on graphite are elements as important as the Jehangir miniature and the Matisse paper-cut pattern.

To adopt Heine's phrase, "these are experimental selves de-classicizing art through new vernaculars: projecting themselves through eclectic, poly-centric, pluralizing strategies. And while they might well seem to erect a Babel of multiplicity, each artist speaking a private language, they do lay an insistent **claim upon the viewer's attention.**"

Their reluctant Duchampism on the seesaw between artistic convention and viewerly feeling is neatly encapsulated by Brandon Taylor's comment that contemporary art is beset by the dilemma of deciding between two alternatives: 'on the one hand, the desire to embrace images and values which speak to a wide public in a sensuously rich, formally expert way; on the other, the need to intensify the Conceptual manner still further by resort to as yet unformulated techniques of evasion, mystification, and displacement of the **normative expectations of the culture.**'¹¹

UNPREDICTABLE INTERVENTIONS

While their predecessors explored the tragic-classical or hymnal-revolutionary elements of the modern, the post-modernist sensibilities that are now coming into their own emphasize playfulness, morphological fluidity and semantic instability. They allow their sources to carrom off one another, provoking the viewer into participating in the art-work rather than passively consuming it. To present the diagnosis succinctly, the contemporary Indian artist appears to be unlearning the reflexes of *homo ideologicus* and giving himself or herself up joyfully to the instincts of *homo ludens*.

The art-work is now often seen, not under anticipation as pre-valued artefact, but as an unpredictable act of intervention between the frame and the world. As such, it negotiates with the site of its location and enunciates various relationships between art and reality, art and history. This assertion of art as a conceptual signifying practice rather than as a mode of spectacular entertainment or of moral edification is an argument which many younger artists consciously enact.

Quotation is a favourite device with these artists: when Atul Dodiya melds Cezanne with David Hockney and Bhupen Khakhar, he engages in good-natured parody, but also invokes the power of a talisman. When Ranbir Singh Kaleka codes his figures in the dialect of myth and fine-tunes them with technology, he modulates desire with memory, experience with

inheritance. So, too, does Amit Ambalal, who goes on a lovingly satirical rampage through the votive ethos of a temple town in his paintings, sending up such venerable figures as yogis and mendicants, encouraging the semi-divine protagonists of the Nathdwara *prabhavati* paintings to leave their shrines for a territory bounded by present-day spatial norms.

At the same time, impulses from the older disciplines continue to be transmitted, so that we can trace mutations in earlier preferences like the abstractionist visionary landscape, the industrial wastescape; across genres many younger artists share a stylized, hieroglyphic surrealism that they derive from their precursors, and which expresses itself either in witty, condensed episodes or through the anti-heroic figure, isolated or moored in a tableau. The chief debt which the new artistic subjectivity owes to its predecessors is a metaphorical energy, an energy of symbolic address that enables these artists to rupture their agenda of contemporaneity with the memoranda of tradition.

This process of aesthetic mediation involves the tapping, by the artist, of the circuit of exchange which connects dichotomies at every level in Indian culture. Contemporary Indian artists operate in almost exactly the same way as the robust popular traditions of religious thought in India have done for centuries — organizing a relay of meaning, a counterpoint between the contrary principles of the classical and the vernacular, the canon and folklore, the hieratic and the demotic, the religious and the secular, the ascetic and the voluptuous, anguish and play.

Replenishing themselves through this free and subversive dialectical interplay of paradoxes, the third generation yokes aesthetic desire to political agency, connects pleasure to labour, the carnival to the machine. While the forms of industrial civilization bulk large in its art-works, so, too, do fetishes retrieved from ancient temple complexes.

Thus, Krishnamachari Bose links the museum cabinet and the fairground display in Conceptualist sequences, while N. Pushpamala (who takes Minimalism and *art povera* for her preferred backdrop) registers a continuing history of violence and oppression through an alphabet of weapons, an array of burnt books. Vivan Sundaram, whose ideas carry him forward into this generation, erects memorials to historical decay and human endurance through the mechanic's materials: metal, engine oil, perspex.

Amitava Das combines the mandarinal reference with popular culture when he nudges his conceptions from the Stone Age mural to the cartoon strip and back. G. Ravinder Reddy's great terracotta and fibreglass heads, mock-deities coated with goldleaf and pink paint, deliberately juxtapose High Art with bazaar kitsch. Sudarshan Shetty's assemblages function as giant fairytale toys held together precariously, like the high-spirited architectural divertimenti of Venturi.

Similarly, Jitish Kallat, Tushar Joag and Kaushik Mukhopadhyay rejoice in the anti-aesthetic impulse, knocking down the art-work as work of art, and shifting the focus of viewing from product to process: by emphasizing

the act of *making* by revealing the stitches, the scratches, the marks of the artist as inventor, they transfigure the commonplace and desacralize the iconic. Animated by a tender lyricism despite their apparent toughness, their works are located in the interval between the throwaway and the artefact.

By recovering the principle of play, or *lila* -- play as a serious principle of construction, operation and effect, play as the first move towards the creation of a parallel reality -- these artists create a space in which argument and theatre, ritual and circus can all take place, often simultaneously. Under their ministrations, received mythologies can be interrogated and disputed, while new and contemporary mythologies may be brought into being. We see here the dim outline of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the total art-work, but it is approached in a fragmentary, notational manner.

By privileging the quirky and the visceral meaning over the abstract and the transcendental, the art work becomes an object of aesthetic encounter that supplies the viewer with a strategy for its own reading even as it is being read. It acts, often, as a *koan*, a riddle, a ruse; a trope of impossibility that gives material embodiment to the vexing yet replenishing conditions of paradox. What results from these manoeuvres is the informalization, the democratization of the image.

IMAGINED ELSEWHERE

The myth of Utopia emerges as a recurrent theme in the work of many young Indian artists today. These imagined elsewheres, versions of the landscape deployed as visionary tropes, include the vista built up in abstract collage, as practised by Ajay Desai, and the composite wastescape shaped by the antagonism between the forces of rural community and industrial development, as practised by Akkitham Vasudevan. It would also include the landscape graphed as a map for expeditions to other planets, as practised by R.M. Palaniappan: this art, combining as it does a vocabulary of arcane scientific motifs with a *sotto-voce* metaphysic of transcendence, draws its impetus from that of K.C.S. Paniker.

The genre of figures in the landscape, modified to suit the exigencies of a dramatically altered environment, finds its fulfilment among artists like Atul Dodiya, Apurva Desai and V. Ramesh. Dodiya has made the passage from photo-realism to a montagist narrative, in which compositional coherences are deliberately thrown into instability by the levity of a floating allusion. Desai evokes the lightness of suburban being through painted photographs of the industrial landscape nibbling at the fringe of the expanding city; Ramesh engages in the charged portraiture of sturdy fishermen labouring against the natural elements. While the *oeuvres* of Sudhir Patwardhan and Gieve Patel may be seen as strong background influences on all three artists, Bhupen Khakhar's whimsical manner has played a significant role in Dodiya's development as a painter.

C. Douglas, Biju Patthan and Amitava Das dwell on the threshold between the worlds of ancestral knowledge and contemporary disquiet. When they portray existential situations, they condense the mural-scale theme to the miniature format, deploying the figure as a heraldic device. They draw their inspiration from archaic tablets, lost scripts, arcane symbologies; they share a concern with the ceremonial dimension of painting: their works are sustained by afterlife rituals, liminal spaces, totemic presences.

The role of the storyteller, who spins the world into a web of tricks, allegories, is one that appeals to many younger contemporary artists. A caricatural spin is placed on fable, proverb and folktale in the works of Amit Ambalal, Anandaji Ray, Ranbir Singh Kaleka and Babu Xavier. Ambalal may be viewed as an exponent of the Bhupen Khakhar–Gulammohamed Sheikh tradition of narrative painting; Ray's surrealism owes as much to George Grosz's grotesque exaggeration as it does to Prabhakar Barwe's low-key, understated disturbances.

While Kaleka is a magician who allows the animal, the human and the technological worlds to spill over one another in a bizarre conversation, Xavier's paintings are alive with the erotic interaction of humans and animals, their miscegenations defining a medley performance in which the Garden of Eden is metamorphosed into Bosch's Garden of Earthly Delights.

Pursuing this vein of interrogation by autobiography into the realm of the female self, artists like Jayashree Chakravarty, Jaya Ganguly, Anju Dodiya, Arpana Caur and Rekha Rodwittiya report visions in a mirror clouded by the conflict between private desire and public role.

Chakravarty delights in the levitating, Chagall-sque figures of lovers, while Ganguly's part-human, part-vegetal chimeras expose a harsh aspect of female sexuality. Anju Dodiya addresses the deep unease of gender personae, of being a women painter; she rehearses the images of Frida Kahlo as well as of Amrita Shergil, yet departs from their flamboyance into a disquietude and tentativeness, placing an aura around her work even as she transmutes it into a visual off-rhyme.

Arpana Caur and Rekha Rodwittiya are altogether more iconic in their treatment, overhauling and recasting such archetypes as the Great Mother into images of the female shorn of patriarchal overtones. Whether through hallucination, reverie, or the staging of an interior psychological theatre, these women painters engage in conscious acts of self-dramatization that constitute a resistance to patriarchal norms even as they stake a claim to unprecedented domains of pleasure.

The sculptors, too, have occupied a new ecology: they have steered a course away from the stable Rodin-Moore-Arp-Hepworth and post-Ram Kinker Baij styles that have long dominated Indian sculpture. Instead, they have embraced a set of freewheeling idioms which recover indigenous materials like terracotta while also employing completely contemporary ones like fibreglass (this, too, may be seen as the legacy of K.G. Subramanyan).

The formal intervention is effected by a break in the continuity of the picture plane, thereby creating a new space, which is defined solely by the linearity of the break. The break is now received in that condition.

These artists have also altered the Laryn form from the function of monum. memory that it has long carried and is modified it on the basis of clues offered by such low art forms as trade puppetry and toy-making. Or then, they twist the monum. into abstract memorials suggestive of atom and separation, the battered contents of internal machines, mineral and vegetable material in constant flux. Among the ranks of archaic ivory sculptors and installed in the G. Ravinder Reddy, Latika Kati and Sudishan Shetty, N. Padmanabha and Kishanmahan Bose discover the possibility of self-renewal.

ART AS A REVOLUTIONARY ACT

On the other hand, a persistent concern with the classic *topos* of socialism characterizes the work of certain sculptors, who — while embracing the liberation offered by the marriage of High Modernist sculptural conceptions with the forms of the marketplace — nevertheless persevere in a vision of art as a revolutionary act, as an instrument of deliverance.

Under this rubric come sculptors like N. N. Rimzon and Alex Mathew, who situate their image-making practices in terms of a broadly Leftist sociological perspective: they operate from a 'progressive' aesthetic which takes for its goal the furthering of an indigenous contemporaneity backed by the templates of myth. In this, they look back to the thought and art of Ram Kinker Baij. Santiniketan's enterprising modernist *maître à la*. From Baij, these sculptors inherit a reverence for the heroism of labour and saintliness, the symbolism of toil and renunciation, the perennial opposition of praxis and hedonism.

The resonances of Raza, Gaitonde and Nasreen Mohamedi continue to be heard in contemporary abstractionism. Divergent though their approaches are, Vilas Shinde, Sunil Gawde and Vijay Shinde are united by the fact that they work within strict geometric principles of rotation and parallelism. An element of design reinforces their conceptions: the motif is conserved, not dissipated in their paintings. Chitrovanu Mazumdar, Achuthan Kuddalur and Bhagwan Chavan stand, by contrast, for that branch of non-representational art which accentuates an expressionist handling, calligraphic play and the dilution of the motif.

With this, I conclude what has necessarily been a brief tour through the Borghesian encyclopaedia of titles that is contemporary Indian art. As with any survey of phenomena in progress, I can hope to do little more than indicate the general tendencies of the time. Even as I write, the paintings, sculptures and installations that I have described may have transformed themselves completely, and betrayed this account. That, too, is a feature of our unstable times: the artist affirms his or her right to mutability; to the

critic, there remains the task of formulating a treacherous cartography of dilemmas and choices.

I console myself with Gadamer's pertinent reflection that the expressive power of an art-work lies in its inexhaustibility of meaning, in the fact that it 'cannot be restricted to its original historical horizon, in which the beholder was actually the contemporary of the creator. It seems instead to belong to the experience of art that the work of art always has its own present.'

NOTES

1. For a detailed discussion of this phenomenon, see Eric Hobsbawm, 'Inventing Traditions': Introduction to Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
2. Sudipta Kavirat, 'The Imaginary Institution of India', in *Subaltern Studies VII: Writings on South Asian History and Society* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 33.
3. Clement Greenberg, 'Avant-Garde and Kitsch' (1939), in *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), pp. 3-4.
4. Tapati Guha-Thakurta, *The Making of a New 'Indian' Art: Artists, Aesthetics and Nationalism in Bengal, c. 1850-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 202.
5. Partha Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India 1850-1922: Occidental Orientations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 288-9.
6. Ranjit Hoskote, 'Rabindranath Tagore: Portrait of a Prophet as an Anarchist', in *Humanscape*, vol. II, no. VIII (Bombay: Foundation for Humanisation, 1995), p. 25.
7. Geeta Kapur, *Contemporary Indian Artists* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978), p. xi.
8. Salman Rushdie, 'Imaginary Homelands' in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (New York: Granta Books/Viking Penguin, 1991), p. 20.
9. Quoted in Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), p. 395.
10. Heinrich Heine, 'Memoirs', in *Selected Prose*, trans. and ed. Ritchie Robertson (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 310. In this passage, Heine describes his great-uncle, a colourful adventurer, as the emblem of propitious historical circumstances: 'He . . . was partly an enthusiast who propagated cosmopolitan, utopian ideas . . . partly a soldier of fortune who . . . broke down or leapt over the decaying barriers of a decaying society.' It might be argued that there is a certain affinity between this engaging eighteenth-century personality and many contemporary Indian artists.
11. Brandon Taylor, *The Art of Today* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson/Everyman Art Library, 1995), p. 169.
12. Hans-Georg Gadamer, 'Aesthetics and Hermeneutics' (1964), in *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, David E. Linge (trans. and ed.) (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. 95.

SAMIK BANDYOPADHYAY

Theatre: From Metropolis to Wasteland

Colonial rule in India with its strategy of cultural hegemony had, by the beginning of the twentieth century, managed to establish in Calcutta, Mumbai and Chennai three formidable nodal points for the dissemination of a colonial culture. The three universities set up at the three metropolises significantly enough in 1857 — the year of the First Indian War of Independence — served as effective institutional agencies for a well-planned homogenization of the education system which henceforth would be engaged in developing a 'class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals and in intellect' as formulated by Macaulay in his famous Minutes of 1835. A strategy, aimed at alienating this new class culturally from its indigenous roots, chose to valorize the Victorian British culture over the native which was stigmatized as vulgar and low. The Orientalists, Indian and British, battling against the Westernizers, were in partial agreement with the latter in their disparagement of the popular and folk forms. In the process, the popular traditional theatre forms in the metropolises and their immediate areas of influence gave way to the evolution of the actor-managerial tradition as an institution in the metropolises, each of which came to have theatre buildings and repertory companies housed in them, their styles modelled on the visiting British companies touring India from time to time (given the hazards of travel persisting till the early years of the present century, the visiting companies were not the best of their kind, and were generally either small town or in declining form). While the new theatrical models spawned a new indigenous dramaturgy in the metropolises, the urban companies, in their turn, spawned touring companies travelling to small towns far from the metropolises. The Anglo-American theatrical tradition in its Victorian manifestation was reconstructed in India with a larger input of songs and spectacle, with a touch of magic, a looser structure of narrative, and with one significant departure from its source or model — in its dependence on mythology and saint lore for subject. In its regional variants — the Parsi theatre companies travelling the north and east extensively, the commercial-professional theatre in Calcutta, and the *jatra*, its theatre-in-the-round variation, travelling into Assam, Orissa and Bihar and the *nataka mandalis* or *company natakas* doing the rounds in western and southern India — the 'new' theatre at the turn of the century absorbed local idioms, both musical and theatrical, to create its popular base. The Dramatic Performances Act, 1876, and the long catalogue of banned plays give a

somewhat magnified impression of the tussle between theatre and the state in the colonial period. In practice, however, whatever nationalism or protest surfaced in theatre was generally carefully veiled, and neither social melodrama nor the devotional or mythological genre, the two major forms of the time, was in any way even potentially subversive.

While the mainstream dominated right till the 1940s with Ketaki Dutta, one of the last survivors of the tradition, recalling flowers magically opening up on stage and revealing decked-out fairies within, or supernaturals descending by concealed silken strings, far from the metropolises there survived several carnivalesque traditional forms with a strong critical thrust or celebrating physicality. The Victorian aesthetics unquestioningly internalized by the nationalists (with rare exceptions) continued to leave these traditions practically invisible till the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) in the war years brought some of these to the view of select audiences in the cities. The IPTA's project of rediscovering the traditional performative forms had its ideological base in a larger programme seeking to provide its parent organization, the Communist Party, with a cultural identity, at a point of time when the Party's stand on the war, its decision to support the war efforts of the colonial government against the nationalist strategy of non-co-operation and resistance aimed at compelling a government at a disadvantage to concede rights and facilities under pressure, had considerably alienated the Party. Gramsci's ideas on the role of culture in a hegemonizing project were yet to surface, and neither the Party leadership nor the cultural workers inspired by the anti-fascist cultural movements abroad, had the ideological vision to nurture the project which died a premature death. Almost all the artistes who had found and established an identity and popular standing in the IPTA project broke away to function on their own.

THE NEW REALISM OF *NABANNA*

While war conditions, marked by black-outs and famine in parts of the country and economic constraints and panic all over, served to bring the mainstream theatre in the theatres and in the touring circuit to a temporary lull, the IPTA sparked off a new line of theatre more realistic than it, drawing on the Stanislavskian ideal as it had started percolating in India. But the first landmark of the IPTA brand of theatre fell between two stools: Bijan Bhattacharya, the playwright offered a text conceived in terms of a pre-Brechtian 'epic' model — episodic, historical, privileging a community over the individual — but the production, directed jointly by the playwright and Sombhu Mitra, failed to find a form adequate to the text whose originality was read as formal failure, and a rather limited concept of realism inhibited its possibilities. But *Nabanna* scored with the raw power of its authenticity, recording the plight and humiliation of the people who were driven by the Great Bengal Famine of 1943–4 to seek survival in the streets of the big city.

A whole band of actors and actresses with no background in theatre (with the exception, of course, of Sombha Mitra, who had had a professional career in the theatre for barely a year and a half, and given it up in disgust), trained by Bijan Bhattacharya — who had abstracted an acting style encompassing everyday naturalism in all its details and melodramas drawn from his close study and understanding of and absorption in folkways and working out of a passion for the relief of the famine-stricken — brought to *Nabanna* a quality of performance that marked a new realism in Indian theatre.

With less than fifty performances to its credit before it closed down within a year, *Nabanna* did not have the exposure that could have influenced the course of Indian theatre. As the war moved to its last phase, yet another trend was defining itself in the Indian theatre scene. The great rediscovery and resurgence of Shakespeare in the British theatre of the 1920s and 1930s came to have its impact on Indian theatre, mainly through the touring company called Shakespearana led by Geoffrey Kendal, who followed up his first Indian tour for the wartime Entertainment National Service Association with a series of tours from 1946 onwards, and Sultan Padamsee's Shakespeare productions with the Theatre Group in Mumbai. There were of course visiting actors and theatre companies contributing to the fresh look at Shakespeare. In an interview in 1964, Mama Warekar, one of the father-figures of modern Marathi theatre, recalled: 'In 1905 I saw Matheson Lang playing Hamlet when he was here. During the Second World War, Gielgud played Hamlet at the Excelsior in Bombay. During my recent illness I was delirious. My doctor was astonished when in my delirium I saw Gielgud's *Hamlet* from beginning to end.'¹

The Shakespeare productions, circulating among and impressing a whole generation of young theatre workers who had the passion and the idealism to explore the possibilities of an experimental theatre, opened up a model of theatre quite different from the indigenized Victorian tradition dominated by the actors supported by music and spectacle. The New Shakespeare demanded a reverence for the text, for close reading, analysis, understanding, and a consistent interpretation of the lines through dramatic action conceived in terms of 'total' theatre, that is, theatre as a balance of acting, sound and music, scenic design, and illumination, with the director committed to the text and its inherent values, in perfect control over an ensemble of performers and technicians. Both Utpal Dutt in Calcutta (who had a short stint touring with the Kendals, and later dedicated his long study of 'Shakespeare's social consciousness' in Bengali to Kendal whom he acknowledged as a guru till the end of his life) and Ebrahim Alkazi in Mumbai, born of Arab parents and discovered by Sultan Padamsee who initiated him in the new dramaturgy, brought to Indian theatre qualities that remained alien for a long time before they could be absorbed and made part of distinctively individual creative idioms by a small body of directors. The most prominent among these would be Satyadev Dubey and Ratan Thiyam, both capable of manoeuvring and

animating the entire stage space with great imaginative vision and a rich reading of the text.

Dutt and Alkazi followed the same trajectory, beginning with Shakespeare in the English language theatre catering to a small elite audience in the big cities alone, moving to European classics and contemporary plays (Alkazi choosing the Greeks and Chekov; Dutt, Shaw and Odets), before plunging into language theatre. Temperamentally and ideologically quite different, both of them explored the potential of stage space in a manner that remains unemulated. While Alkazi went on to use Delhi's Purana Qila for theatre, Dutt changed the look of his proscenium space in infinite variations, with rostra, levels, screens, revolving discs used unconventionally, as well as forms and structures used on stage.

REDISCOVERY OF SISIRKUMAR BHADURI

Dutt and Alkazi drew their inspiration from what has often been called 'The Shakespeare Revolution' in Britain. They would both go on responding to European developments in theatre, while Sombhu Mitra, after his first exposure to the IPTA brand realism, would return to the Bengali theatrical tradition that he had abandoned, and rediscover Sisir Kumar Bhaduri (1889–1959) who had been one of the first in the country to recognize the radical shift that was coming to theatre in Europe in the 1920s. In an interview in 1965, six years after Bhaduri's death, Mitra told me: 'He was perhaps the first real director that we had in our theatre, one who thought of a total theatre. We could not have started if he hadn't been there. It is only because Bhaduri created the total theatre in Bengal that we have been able to experience theatre at a level of deeper realization. But all his tremendously beautiful theatrical works were confined to the early part of his life, to the first ten to twelve years of his career. His magical productional genius was perhaps never again in evidence at that height of excellence. That's my personal impression. It's my feeling that nature does not endow one with such powers for ever. Yet the reference for theatre is perhaps altogether different for us who profited from exposure to these productions by Bhaduri and we remain grateful to him for that alone.'²

With the IPTA disintegrating at the end of the war and on the eve of Independence, with the Communist Party no longer finding it so relevant, and most of the more prominent artistes in the movement preferring independence from organizational obligations and demands, there was scope for emergence of several more loosely knit organizations, each under the leadership of one or other of those artistes who had broken off from the IPTA. The process was expedited when the Communist Party and its so-called 'Front' organizations, including the IPTA, were banned in 1948, soon after Independence. Theatre groups like Bohurupee, Little Theatre Group, Calcutta Theatre, Anushilan Sampraday, Rupakar, Gandharva, Nandikar,

Theatre Centre and Nakshatra emerged in Calcutta, setting a pattern of theatre activity that has dominated the theatre scene in India ever since. While the pattern has been emulated all over India, in the metropolises, state capitals and even district towns, the groups have been generally short-lived with most of the exceptions, like Bohurupee, Nandikar and the People's Little Theatre, centred in Calcutta. The pattern may be described as one in which a group of unpaid, semi-professional actors, actresses and theatre technicians gather around a director (till before the early 1970s, when the National School of Drama in New Delhi began to send out trained actors, actresses and directors, most of these directors and actors and actresses were self-taught and self-trained), who has virtually dictatorial control over the small organization, the final say in the choice of plays for production, and all major decisions, with members of the group committed to serve in all possible ways the daily needs and infrastructural obligations of the group. With the members of the group employed in regular jobs, mostly secretarial and teaching, their theatrical activity is generally confined to two to three hours in the evening. With no theatre 'house' of their own, the groups have to go for one-night stands at the two to ten theatres available for hire in the city (the number of theatres depending on the popularity of the theatre in the particular city), every single performance calling for publicity expenses beyond all proportion to its economics, the transportation of sets to the theatre and the setting up for every performance taking an additional toll. Catering to an enlightened urban middle-class clientele, this 'non-professional' theatre cannot afford to raise its ticket rates too high. The groups rarely break even on a performance, but can survive, if they are good enough, on invitation performances ('call shows' in local theatre parlance) and government grants. Government grants with provision for regular salaries (generally too low for a decent lifestyle, hence forcing the 'salaried' actor to supplement his income from other irregular assignments) for a section of the group or company and funds for production, were made available to a few such groups only in the early 1970s. The number of groups on such doles has increased over the years, but as far as I know (information on this score is usually a closely guarded secret, shared by the government and the few recipients), the number has not crossed ten. For some of the groups, this has facilitated a level of professionalization with a band of actors and actresses able to devote all their time to training and practice and educating themselves for theatre. Some of these groups, in recent years, have appeared in international festivals with mixed success.

But these privileged groups have been an exception. For most of the groups, idealism has remained the binding factor. Their productions, played in the languages of the particular regions, have drawn audiences from enlightened middle classes in the respective regions with little scope for circulation in other regions. Language has remained an insurmountable barrier, with cultural modes, mores, and attitudes distinctive to the regions and the languages also standing in the way of wider dissemination and

reception. Productions played in Hindi and in English have wider geographical reach but remain confined to a smaller and more affluent class, often quite cut off from the larger audience nurtured on a longer and richer regional tradition of theatre and with a more sophisticated taste. A large number of Hindi and English language productions (with striking exceptions, of course), in their endeavour to reach out, have to compromise on the text, for verbal subtleties and nuances, whenever they surface, tend to lose their edge with an audience theatrically and intellectually not adequately initiated. A lot of these circulating/travelling productions have fallen back on the broad farce or the spectacle or star appearances (film stars making rare stage appearance) or risque themes at the cost of theatric values. The best theatre in post-Independence India has been that offered by a band of directors — mostly self-trained, but quite a few from among products of the National School of Drama — working in and out of their regional cultures, with their theatre groups retaining a kind of organizational continuity at a semi-professional level losing their performers to the cinema and TV persistently, but gaining replenishments as well; the group, often identified with the director, marked by an identity of its own, the identity in most cases a matter more of style or the presence of an actor or actress or a political involvement than a well-thought-out theatre philosophy or theatre ideology. Unlike most experimental theatre groups in other countries of the world today, the repertoires of most of these groups, which otherwise would come under the category of the experimental, have the usual mix of the more conventional British repertory system, with a company offering a broad range of plays for a wide range of viewers, making no special effort to develop or nurture a more committed audience.

FROM GROUPS TO THE AKADEMI

The emergence of these theatre groups (in Indian theatre parlance, they have been called 'groups' rather than 'companies', with the latter term surfacing more recently with groups seeking the more professional identity of a 'company'), with a band of directors asserting their attitudes or styles, in the metropolises outside the more stolid theatre 'houses' and companies, marked the first phase of the post-Independence Indian theatre scene. There was an almost immediate reactive tendency towards standardization with the setting up of the Sangeet Natak Akademi (the National Academy of Music, Theatre and Dance) in 1952 and the institution of the annual Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards. The Akademi did not have the patience to chart out the national scene in the performing arts at so many levels, in so many modes, with such a range of regional cultural divergences — urban, rural, rururban, classical, traditional, folk and experimental. The Akademi is yet to find a foolproof system of giving proper recognition to the wide range of worthwhile theatre activity in the country and individual achievements.

But the annual awards, like any such convention of awards anywhere, have contributed to making visible the phenomenon of several theatre personalities and particularly theatrical forms that would have otherwise remained confined to particular regions. Through the awards, the occasional festivals in Delhi and other cities, and a publishing programme of its own, the Akademi has been the only institution serving the need for disseminating theatre experiences from regional contexts to beyond the regional confines.

If the Akademi in 1952 had been the first attempt at an institutionalization of theatre as a national experience with the inevitable tendency towards standardization, the setting up of the National School of Drama in Delhi was the second step in the same direction. Over the years, the different directors of the School have brought to the School their own perceptions of theatre training, giving different orientations to the course. While the School has been able to impart a fairly sophisticated competence to most of its products (barring the few with inadequate imagination and talents), the facilities provided at the School have tended to make its products incapable of coping with the poorer facilities available in the regional theatres — the gap serving to produce a trained community of theatre workers with no theatres where they can function! In spite of the best intentions of several directors and the faculty of the School to provide the trainees with enough exposure to the distinctive regional idioms of the theatre in India, the problem of a new director or an actor/actress finding his/her locus in theatre in terms more broadly cultural than merely technical has remained unresolved. Hence the National School of Drama has had little impact on the regional theatres, particularly in the regions where the theatre has had a rich tradition; though it has created flutters in places where the tradition had been absent, and particularly where the regional government has sought an opening for a new theatre culture in the state concerned. In other words, the School remains tied to institutional/governmental support all through, even in the ultimate productivity of its training mode, and cannot really penetrate the theatre sensibility of the theatres in the country.

PLURALITY AND ITS CATEGORIES

Under the circumstances, Indian theatre is marked by a plurality that can be categorized in the following branches: professional-commercial, traditional, folk, street and protest, subsidized/sponsored, the Little Little Theatre, and the Big Little Theatre. The professional-commercial theatre has been most visible and effective in Mumbai and Calcutta for the longest span of time. The distinction between the traditional and the folk lies in the nature and life of the continuity evident in these parallel streams of cultures. While the traditional tends to adhere more strictly to the tradition, and is sustained — and often smothered — by institutional support in some form or another as in the case of the Ramlila of Ramnagar, folk theatre has a more independent,

evolutionary life, in its direct dependence on and involvement with the folk existence and folkways.

A lot of traditional theatre has gone the sponsored/subsidized way, and has naturally lost the innate capacity for growth that must have been there initially, since the sponsors would like to 'preserve' it rather than let it live a natural growth pattern. The mission to preserve implies and contains a certain concept of the form of the theatric experience in question in its supposed essential purity. The purity drive often leads the preservationists to effect a cleansing of the tradition as it has survived and a notionally purer form replaces the current form, or two or more variants of the same form co-exist, the living/evolving ones surviving through change and reorientation, the supported/subsidized ones preserved at a point of time often arbitrarily chosen as that of its 'purest' manifestation. Cultural interventionists like Shivarama Karanth and Ashutosh Bhattacharya have played ambivalent roles in their 'preservationist' projects for Yakshagana and Chho (or Chhau) respectively. So have the Sangeet Natak Akademi and several regional 'official' institutions dedicated to the cause of protecting and preserving traditional forms.

The other kind of sponsored/subsidized theatre — the repertory companies maintained by the governments, Central and State — is in a contradictory situation which is likely to become worse in the coming years with the drift towards the market culture and the government's insistence on economic self-sufficiency for all such organizations. The 'subsidized' repertory companies are supposed to have the freedom and support for really experimental work; but with the 'professional' role and function officially thrust on them, they choose to carry as many petty comedies and farces and pretentious literary exercises (often dramatic adaptations of fiction) as they can on their repertoire, and cater to an audience that takes the official label too seriously and is not the really demanding and discriminating audience of the popular theatre (like the *jatra*) that has been known to have beaten up companies for a less than competent performance! Neither properly professional in the sense in which theatre professionals elsewhere have to fight for their living in a doggedly competitive market and face the risk of being dropped by the trade if they fail to make the grade, nor experimental in the sense that they have the guts to fail by risk or choice, the sponsored/subsidized band are a pathetic lot. The best of them have proved their worth only in occasional performances within or more often outside the sponsored/subsidized circuit — in what can be called the open professional circuit, as in the cinema and the TV, where Manohar Singh and Uttara Baokar and M.K. Raina have given excellent performances. Protectionism has kept these officially supported repertory companies inhibited within obligations to the authorities who lay down official directions and programmes and to a certain extent even entertainment values.

At the other extreme from the subsidized/supported theatre, the street

and protest theatre has sought to operate beyond and in defiance of the systems of state support, subsidy and commerce. While several of these small theatre groups continue in their mission of awakening the conscience of the people and responding to political and social issues, they lie outside the pale of media attention and get somewhat marginalized in the process. Once they have refused to advertise, or ask the media for publicity and exposure, or ask for commercial sponsorship, the media, the establishment and other theatres too choose to deny their presence and challenge altogether. It thus becomes an uphill task for such a group to survive and stay together, with temptations of stardom, easy fame, and economic security pressing upon it. A street theatre group, committed to an ideology of protest, can survive only if the group as a whole, all its members — like any radical/activist political group — are convinced about the rightness of their choice, and totally committed to it. Several such groups have succumbed to the temptations, or disintegrated with their members opting out for better prospects and media exposure. Several such groups have sought funding support from foundations and trusts, and, with their dependence on and answerability to these organizations, have diluted their militancy. Those that have survived have to struggle against a lot of odds to retain their independence.

By the Little Little Theatre I mean those groups that would put up a show for four or five performances, to a lot of high-profile publicity, and call it a day, from a faith in 'the performance's the thing' — a theatre primarily self-indulgent, exhibitionist, and self-referential, and not particularly concerned with a continuing, developing, interactive dialogue with a community, or if you would like, audience. A lot of the Little Little Theatre overlaps with the sponsored/subsidized theatre, and tends to dissipate into irrelevance in a longer view.

The Big Little Theatre is the scene occupied by the groups that have survived for twenty to fifty years, like Bohurupee, Nandikar, People's Little Theatre, Theatre Workshop, Chetana in Calcutta, Aawishkar in Mumbai, Theatre Academy in Pune, Chorus Repertory Theatre and Kalakshetra in Imphal, Abhiyan in Delhi, Maya Theatre (which has shifted location several times) and several others with a definite image or identity in each case, identified with a certain attitude evident in its choice of plays, a certain stylistic orientation, and above everything else, a directorial presence. With most of these groups a single director has led the group for a time long enough to leave his/her personal directorial mark on it, sometimes to the point of inhibiting the individual creativity of a younger director who may have succeeded him/her. There have been directors with distinctive individual styles and approaches, but no groups to which they are attached; hence they direct for several groups on time-bound assignments. With most of these groups depending on actors, actresses and backstage workers making their living in other professions and spending only a relatively small part of their time in theatre, the continuity of such a group alone ensures the development

of an actor, actress or technician. Non-professional in a sense, these groups spread throughout India have reached professional standards by sheer hard work and severe organizational discipline.

It is the Big Little Theatre that has dominated theatre in India, particularly in its involvement in the development of a New Indian Drama — discovering, projecting, and disseminating the dramatic works of at least three generations of post-Independence playwrights.

RENAISSANCE OF INDIAN THEATRE

The first two decades of post-Independence theatre in India vacillated between European naturalism (in the form of relocalized Indian language adaptations of Ibsen, Chekov, Gorky, Odets, Miller, or probing slices of life from the contemporary Indian reality), return to the classics (Sanskrit and the modern Indian languages), and drawing on folk forms and conventions. The mid-1960s to the mid-1970s saw the emergence of the first new generation of playwrights — Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar, Vijay Tendulkar, Girish Karnad, Mohit Chattopadhyay, Chandrasekhar Kambar, Manoj Mitra, Utpal Dutt, G.P. Deshpande and Mahesh Elkunchwar. Older playwrights who contributed to the New Drama included Bijan Bhattacharya, Adya Rangacharya, and C.T. Khanolkar. By the mid-1960s, both the euphoria over Independence and the first shock of disillusionment had given way to a criticality that sought to explore in theatrical terms — more particularly in terms of theatrical abstraction — political, philosophical and psychological issues left shelved in the years of nationalist struggle to be prioritized only after Independence. The collapse of the well-made play, and the general abandonment of narrative and the supposedly Aristotelian coda in the new crop of plays gave directors the challenge to experiment with all possible permutations and combinations of both the Western and the indigenous theatre conventions — and threw up a whole host of directors grappling with these plays — Satyadev Dubey, Rajinder Nath, Mohan Maharshi, Vijaya Mehta, M.K. Raina, Bansi Kaul, Shyamanand Jalan, Ajitesh Banerjee, Shyamal Ghose, Asit Bose, Bibhas Chakraborty, Prasanna, B.V. Karanth, K.N. Panikkar, Shanta Gandhi, Jabbar Patel, Shreeram Lagoo, Amol Palekar, Pravin Joshi, Ratan Thiyam, H. Kanhailal and Habib Tanvir; with Sombhu Mitra, Utpal Dutt, and E. Alkazi, who had started earlier, joining in. Thanks to what now can be called the Renaissance of Indian theatre, some of the best works in this period projected the many regional identities of the Indian theatre, with most of the directors drawing on the cultural resources (in some cases, traditional or folk, in other cases, urban, modern and intellectual) of their particular locations. In Kerala, Panikkar fell back on the traditional dance idioms and martial arts of Kerala; Tanvir brought in folk actors from Chhattisgarh; Karanth, in Karnataka, could use both Yakshagana and his rich experiences with the touring Gubby

Company, while the Madrasians and the Bengalis worked more closely with and on the text, working out of a more cerebral, intellectual interpretative tradition. At their best, the directors interacting with the traditional and/or folk theatre sought to go to the core of these forms, to catch their rhythms or motivating energies, gestural idioms, occasionally formal conventions or devices, and use them to convey a modern sensibility at work. This is evident in Tanvir's *Charandas Choro*, *Bahadur Kalam*, or Patel's *Ganairam Koriya* or Kannadlal's *Kabul Kewla*. In the magnificently spectacular and richly meaningful *Chakravartya*, Ratan Thiyam created his own rituals, which to outsiders looked traditional. On the other hand, Dubey in his production of Sircar's *Evam Indrajit*, Vijaya Mehta, with her production of Elkunchwar's *Wada Chavhandi*, or Jagoo with his production of Deshpande's *Vaithya's Dharmashala*, or Apitesh Banerjee in *Jakhan Fka*, his adaptation of Wesker's *Room*, or Bibhas Chakraborty in his productions of Mohit Chattopadhyay's *Ravakta* and Manoj Mitra's *Chakibhanga Madhu*, explore the history of changing human relationships in changing times, revealing in a sense the history of modern India in the explication of densely loaded texts through meticulously sculpted realistic performances.

The sharp divide between the theatre of primal energies and the theatre of ideas and relationships was recast into a different construction in the early 1970s, when playwright-director Badal Sircar improvised a theatre idiom, blatantly physical in its projection of ideas and protesting passions. For Karnad, Dubey and Karanth (as they all so generously acknowledged at a recent meeting in Calcutta), Sircar's *Evam Indrajit* (*Evam Indrajit* in Hindi) served to open up an area of freedom that allowed them to experiment with open ended sceptical forms. Sircar eventually assumed the questioning persona of his central character, Indrajit, and pursued it to the point where he could identify the forces of commerce and established power impinging on his freedom of theatric expression, and then broke away from the theatre that he had practised and served till then to construct a different paradigm of theatre altogether. Uncomfortable with the first appellation he had chosen — the Third Theatre — he soon came to call it Free Theatre, free both economically (neither charging for entrance nor depending on or asking for sponsorship support) and politically. The major issues that Sircar has since explored in his Free Theatre plays have been those of violence, ranging from anti-social to state to nuclear; exploitation, particularly as practised in the perpetuation of the rural-urban divide, and the deliberate 'denial' of the village in the persistent valorization of the metropolis and the cataloguing of its ills and problems; and the evil of religious obscurantism and intolerance. Sircar's model has sparked off Free Theatre projects in different parts of the country, with Sircar often conducting workshops for them and transmitting his ideas and formal approach alike.

Television which appeared on the scene in India in the mid-1970s, has been blamed for the decline of the Indian theatre, both in terms of

experimentation and popular appreciation from the peak of the 1970s, with the only really adventurous figures on the scene in the 1970s being Neelam Mansingh Choudhury, Ratan Thiyam, and H. Kanhailal who has made a brilliant comeback with his *Karna*. There have been very few playwrights in the 1980s and 1990s — with the exception of Satish Alekar and of course, Mahesh Elkunchwar and G.P. Deshpande continuing — necessitating a consequent return to adaptations of foreign masterworks. The reason for the decline may not be just television drawing away both performers and audiences. Somehow it was a democratic criticality, a consistent negotiation with the social and political forces at play a fast-changing political scene that had provided post-Independence Indian theatre with its rationale and inspiration. With the democratic experiment itself reduced to a sinister adhocism, the consequent confusion and cynicism seem to have left theatre dry and barren.

NOTES

1. Interviewed on 'Shakespeare on Marathi Stage' in *Shakespeare among Indians*, reprint of a supplement issued by *Oxygen News* to mark the quartercentenary of William Shakespeare, 1964.
2. *Parichay*, vol. 34 no. 6, January 1966. Translation mine.

CHIDANANDA DAS GUPTA

Cinema: The Unstoppable Chariot

Despite all its problems, setbacks, real and imaginary obstacles, the Indian cinema remains a massive institution, a monument to the country's self-sufficiency in the sphere of mass entertainment, so firmly based in indigenous psychology as to be capable of meeting virtually any challenge from outside. The world's largest film-making country has also firmly set the model for film-making in all of South Asia and beyond it for some Third World countries, despite religious and cultural differences, even antagonisms. Next to Hollywood, India's is the largest, most powerful, independent and influential film industry in the world. Most of its expansion took place in the period since Independence.

The problem of modernity and tradition, religion and science, old and new, East and West — expressions of the same basic conflict — have been predictably central to the Indian cinema. Behind its façade of entertainment, cinema has been the cultural battleground on which the old and the new have been fighting it out, at least for the masses of people who have little access to the high culture of the cities and who live insulated within a closed circle on the other side of a great divide.

Some of the social processes activated after Independence need to be recalled here. Self-contained agricultural communities were increasingly drawn into the periphery, if not the vortex, of the industrialization and urbanization process. With the establishment of large new townships, often displacing agricultural populations, and many rural professions losing relevance, migrant labour came together from many regions, religions, languages, customs and habits for centuries isolated from each other. The enlargement of existing towns and the growth of industry had the same effect. The workplace tended to become more secular and modern, if insecure; the home tended to remain a traditional refuge, generating tensions for those who shared both.

Folk entertainment is by nature regional in a country of vast distances and diverse linguistic cultures; it is a home-grown product that does not travel too well. Nor is it able to answer questions arising out of the meeting of disparate elements in the workplace. The products of science and, more importantly, the scientific-rational ideas behind them, challenged traditional faiths. Folk entertainment failed to answer all these needs fully, tended to become unfashionable and to get reduced to reliquary collected by the urban sophisticate. It is of course important to remember here that folk entertainment is created by people themselves, and cinema is canned for far-flung

audiences by manufacturers in metro cities. There cannot therefore be a simplistic transition from folk to pop culture in an agricultural society industrializing itself.

Another factor that may have influenced the values of the popular film since Independence is what can be called the great feudal backlash. The country's Constitution was drawn up by a highly educated leadership influenced by Western ideas not entirely shared by other levels of society. The legislation that followed tried to provide support to ideas of secularism, democracy, women's rights, and affirmative action for the traditionally underprivileged. In a slowly spiralling process, it has aroused expectations in the have-nots and panic among the haves, breeding violence and renewing an ideological conflict between old and new.

Before Independence, the national leadership was possibly more aware of these conflicts and tried to create a blueprint of modern India, an image of what the new Indian should be, how the country should modernize without losing its identity. Mahatma Gandhi's ability to identify with the masses and to communicate a moral synthesis of modernity and tradition even to the most ignorant villager produced a firm cultural leadership. The cinema of this pre-Independence period shared something of the dreams of new nationhood and reflected many of its ideas of religious tolerance and freedom from prejudices such as those of caste. In independent India this cultural leadership of the masses appears to have declined; in its preoccupation with rapid industrial growth on the one hand and political fire fighting on the other the psychological need to find ways to meet the challenges to tradition receded into the background. The cinema found its way into this vacuum and became an important arbiter of mass culture, reflecting and affecting it in a symbiotic relationship.

Government attempts to 'reform' the cinema and bring it closer to constitutional goals resulted in the strengthening of a minority cinema of creative sophistication and social conscience which was already coming into being after Independence. This largely left the popular cinema to its own devices, and in some ways reinforced its isolation from the world of high art.

THE EARLY CRUSADES

In the years before World War II and immediately after Independence, we find a closer understanding between the attitudes in cinema and the aspirations of the national leadership. The nearer we come to our times, the greater the divergence. Fantasy and fact have increasingly gained from each other. The mythicalization of the birth and growth of the hero in relation to his mother and his family gained momentum in the 1970s and reached its peak by the mid-1980s. In this we perceive to a significant extent a radical change from the catalytic role played by pre-Independence cinema. The 1930s had seen a vigorous intervention of the cinema on behalf of the modern, side by side

with the mythological. Most of the social films of this period were concerned with problems of caste, dowry, freedom of choice in marriage, and so on.

In Shantaram's *Duniya na Maatray* (1937), an old man marries a girl younger than his daughter but she refuses to consummate the marriage and is aided by the old man's 'modern' English-speaking social worker daughter to the extent that the two sing Longfellow's *Psalm of Life* together. The old man is helped by his sister, but has to accept defeat, acknowledge his error. Seen today, the film still retains much of its power. Master Vinayak's *Brahmachari* (1937) made fun of obsessive religiosity and defended a modern woman's chase of the man of her choice. Such a modern woman would be the object of direct or indirect denigration today. P.C. Barua's *Devdas* (1935) became an archetypal film in the romantic advocacy of freedom of choice in marriage. Himanshu Roy and Franz Osten's film, *Achhut Kanya* (1936), deplored untouchability. K. Subramaniam's *Balyogini* (1936) described the plight of child widows. The cinema was in transition in the 1940s — from studio to independent production, from colonial status to Independence, from the middle class to the working class audience; it produced fewer of the socially aware big box office films, but innovated much. Shantaram's film on Dr Kotnis's medical mission to China brought out India's new-found internationalism with zeal. Uday Shankar's *Kalpana* (1948) celebrated a new prestige and enthusiasm for the art of dance, Jagirdar's *Ramshastri* (1944) a phase of Indian history and its standards of justice, K.A. Abbas's *Dharti ke Lal* (1946) a new concern for the downtrodden.

The fifties turned to a more vigorous championing of social causes in the films of Raj Kapoor, Bimal Roy, and Mehboob. Kapoor's *Awara* (1951) sought to establish the individual's democratic right to an identity of his own independent of class and privilege and protested against the glorification of heredity. In Bimal Roy's *Sujata* (1959) an outcaste woman sought to have equal rights on the strength of her own qualities rather than those of her caste. *Do Bigha Zamin* (1953)'s hero must struggle against the avarice of the village moneylender and redeem himself. Guru Dutt, the romantic individualist, berated society for undermining the rights of the artist and called for his recognition. The social satire of *Mr & Mrs 55* dealt with divorce, class distinctions and women's rights in a forthright manner. Mehboob's *Aurat*, later remade as *Mother India* (1957), did have a mother, but an active one, not a mythological shadow; the thrust of her actions was positive and forward-looking. The 1960s saw the dominance of Dharmendra as a kind of muscular-romantic hero. His benign macho is an independent force projected by his personality, not a reflection of an invisible mother figure providing miraculous impetus. In *Samadhi*, for instance, his fight is for the hand of the woman he loves and for the well-being of his son; no mother force lurks behind. The other important hero of the period, Rajesh Khanna, also wields his romantic charm and his innate kindness on his own, without off-stage promptings from an all-embracing mother. One of the major Rajesh

Khanna films, *Amar Prem* (1971), subsumed the mother aspect of woman into that of the beloved. In its respect for woman, it is remarkably different from the films of the 1970s onwards.

UNSAVOURY TRENDS

From India's very first feature film *Harishchandra* (1913) to the latest exercises in Arnold Schwarznegger-type terminators of human beings in the 1990s, Indian cinema has followed the lead of Hollywood. At the same time, it translated Hollywood into such culture specificity and Indianness of idiom as to make itself into a fortress that Hollywood could never penetrate. The social reformist zeal of the 1930s marked a new trend which did not last very long.

World War II marked the real turning point in Indian cinema's attitudes. The shortages generated by it launched a parallel, black-market economy that has steadily grown ever since. A good part of this ill-gotten wealth found a subterranean way to multiply and launder itself in the byways of the film industry, where service accounts for more than goods. The power of this money lured film stars out of the studios to which they were salaried and caused the downfall of studio production, turning every producer into an independent trying to hit the jackpot.

The other factor that changed the picture was the rapid expansion, after Independence, of the working class as well as a class of nouveau riche, both illiterate or semi-literate, but with new money power in their hands. It is to this audience that film makers began to turn, adopting the lowest common denominators of taste in order to find the widest possible acceptance.

In this, the wreckers of studio production who took over as independents used the film star as the instrument, not production values. Production became so star-centred that the stars now ended the practice of making a film from start to finish working at a stretch. There emerged the absurd, uniquely Indian way of stars working in many films at the same time, distributing their energies and their dates among a large number of productions. Costs escalated as production time was stretched and the producer became the slave of the financier with his ill-gotten wealth. Middlemen began to dictate. The style and content of the films was dominated by the taste of the financier and his henchmen.

It took time for the effects to show. Before they became manifest, a sort of brief golden age dawned. The old guard lasted for some time; even in 1957 Shantaram was making highly individual films like *Do Aankhe Bahar Haath* (Two eyes, twelve hands) which was shown at the Berlin Film Festival and attracted some attention. But important new figures emerged — Raj Kapoor, Bimal Roy, Guru Dutt.

It was in the 1960s that the disillusionment began. After the China border war debacle and the death of Nehru, the easy fruits of Independence seemed inaccessible, and with that started the trend toward the denigration of the

State and the apparatus of justice, urging people to take the law into their own hands. Crime and revenge, sex and violence became major ingredients. By the end of the 1970s, even the song, the soul of Indian cinema and its urge towards transcendence, began to lose its traditional charm. Increasing vulgarity invaded the screen until in the nineties songs like *Choli ke piche kya hai* (What's there behind the blouse) became the new hallmark of excellence in the box office. The gentle romanticism of Rajesh Khanna and the mild macho of Dharmendra gave way to the murderous violence of Amitabh Bachchan in the mid-1970s, creating a new symbol of the desperation of the dispossessed. The revolt against oppression which he launched had no alternative scenario and did not end in the displacement of an unjust social order by a just one; it merely meant that the oppressed should turn into the oppressor, unleashing endless cycles of violence. Rajesh Khanna in the 1960s cherished his lady love; with Amitabh Bachchan in the 1970s and 1980s, women came to him, and he treated them with mighty disregard. It was a sign of new times.

The denigration of women kept pace with the glorification of motherhood and revenge perpetrated in the name of family honour. The family was pitted against the state as the saviour of the individual and the group. In the process came an unending celebration of criminality. The post-Bachchan scenario first glorified young love in the Amir Khan persona but this soon wore off and gave way, in the 1990s, to a new code of violence towards women embodied by Shah Rukh Khan: 'How dare she not love me; I will beat her black and blue until she does.' All this influenced and was influenced by the behaviour of the increasing number of the urban unemployed and the pavement dweller, a class bred by post-Independence India besieged by a burgeoning population and constant rural-urban migration.

SONGS FOR THE DECULTURED

One of the distinguishing features of the form that the cinema took in India has been the ubiquitous song-dance dimension. The song is the instrument of transcendence, the philosophical-emotional core, the means of sublimation of the constant eroticism without which our popular film can hardly exist. Vigorous kissing scenes were plentiful in the 1930s but were banned by the British in response to agitation by puritanical women's organizations. The ban remained in force after Independence until the mid-1970s. But the convention had been so firmly established by then that neither the performers nor the audience was enthusiastic to celebrate the relaxation of the ban, which in effect continues. The impact of this on the song-dance dimension has been a formulation of the means of avoiding the kiss as the natural culmination of sexually titillating exposure and highly suggestive dance movements. Every time the climax demands an orgasmic release, the tension is eased through the song.

At the time of Independence and for some time thereafter, songs and dances (especially songs) were derived from either classical or folk sources. With the opening of cultural borders, western pop made its way into the structure and concept of the song-dance segment. Bhaskar Chandavarkar has pointed out how film music was first required to wean away audiences from the musical theatre (such as the Parsi theatre, the Tamasha). Later, he adds, the migrations to West Asia, the exposure to Latin American music and the invasion of the audio cassette drove film music further and further away from elitist high culture toward new equations with plebeian reality. 'Film music', he observes,

is made in dream factories. The urban low and lower middle class is growing in number and the masses moving to cities get cut off from their cultural roots in rural India. They are badly in need of dreams. In the shows of Mumbai, Calcutta, Bangalore, Madras, a rootless deculturated hungry man would like to sing and to listen to music that is a mixture of his hopes and dreams and facts and fiction. There are cultural leftovers; he must use them; he cannot worry too much about the nutrient qualities; he is hungry.

Although of late songs like *Choli ke piche kya hai* have indicated a sharp fall in the quality and taste of the songs, the success of the songs in films like *Roja* or *Rudali* shows that all is not lost and that the song dimension still plays an important psychological part in providing a medium of transcendence for the mass audience.

QUARANTINING SCIENCE

Where religion is concerned, there is an acute unease within the popular cinema regarding the challenges posed by science. If man struts about on the moon, what happens to God? Products and manifestations of science are increasingly in evidence around the lives of even the illiterate villagers in remote areas. There is a sense that behind these, an unspoken challenge is being thrown at traditional beliefs, by the doubts and the new ideas that propel science. Take for instance, the popular faith in the purity of the holy river Ganges and the scientists crying themselves hoarse about its severe pollution by effluents. When the subject was raised some years ago in Parliament, the minister for tourism said it was physically impossible for the waters of the Ganges to be polluted. This was of course later reversed and a Ganges cleaning scheme launched.

The insecurity proceeding from such conflicts has to be neutralized by the cinema in order to set the popular mind at rest. The answer given is simple; separate science from tradition, holding them in two compartments between which no osmosis should be permitted. This 'ritual neutralization', as Ashis Nandy calls it, is the exact opposite of the dynamic synthesis of old

and new that India's cultural and political leadership has sought for a century and a half. To the popular cinema of today, the products of science are for our use but the ideas behind them are not allowed to contaminate our minds. Even in West Bengal, one of the culturally 'modern' areas of the country, there was embarrassed silence over Satyajit Ray's *Devi* which showed a change from superstition to rationality through personal tragedy and without condemnation. The film failed in the box office, unlike many others by Ray.

Religion and the question of the family are intimately bound up. One possible factor behind the emphasis on family values, and justifying revenge for the redemption of family honour, may well be the mistrust of a larger concept of society developing in a country of shrinking distances and centralized constitutional direction. The motif of revenge, increasingly common in the cinema of the last twenty years, is inextricably bound up with the concept of family. Together they seem to say that the unwritten but better-known laws framed within smaller units of society, the village and the family, are more to be trusted than those prescribed for the entire population in a vast country.

The law is iniquitous and is not honestly administered; therefore the individual must take it into his own hands and dispense summary justice in light of his tradition. In his last but one film (*Bobbili Pulu* or the Tiger of Bobbili, 1982) made before he became chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, N.T. Rama Rao, playing an army officer freshly turned bandit, rounds up the custodians of law in a cave, with a battery of guns trained upon them by his henchmen, and reads them a sermon from the Gita where Krishna says: 'From one epoch to another, whenever virtue declines and evil is ascendant, I manifest myself, to protect the good, punish the guilty, and restore order.'

This sense of mission is shared by the Hindi cinema in another way. Its concern is not with the deliverance of society at large, but of the protection of its minuscule units. The sights are set increasingly on the family and the group; society as a whole appears to be too distant, nebulous, unknown and therefore a somewhat fearsome conglomerate compared to the accessible, evident and reassuring values of the family and the group. The world outside is a battleground where laws are not respected, if indeed they are worth respecting. The fear of the loss of the values of pre-industrial tradition seems to grip the core of Indian popular cinema behind its garish façade of superficial modernity evidenced by car chases, gang fights and nightclubs.

CANONIZING MOTHER

In a series of films in the 1970s and 1980s, the mother is the central point around which the children's fortunes revolved. Indeed, the films of the 1970s are remarkable for the sharpness of their emphasis on the centrality of the mother figure. In a number of films starring Amitabh Bachchan, biggest star on the all-India firmament, an almost passive mother figure presides as the

symbol of family unity whose word is law and whose pleasure is her son's primary concern. In *Trishul* (1978), a man gives up the girl he loves because his mother extracted a promise from him at her deathbed that he would marry another, a rich industrialist's daughter, who would help him rise in the world. 'Remember, before you loved Shanti, you loved me.' The rejected girl is of course pregnant by now and when her son grows up, makes him swear vengeance on his father for the maltreatment of his mother. The two protagonists join battle in obedience to their respective mothers. The son traces his father, destroys his position and his wealth, becomes instrumental in his death, and is reunited with him only in repentance at the moment of death.

In *Deewar* (1975) two brothers, one a policeman, the other a bandit, battle for the love of their mother as though they are rivals for the hand of a girl. The bandit gives his life in order to meet the mother in her sickness. It is significant that in most of these films the father disappears from the scene at a very early stage but the sons hardly ever lose contact with the mother; in fact their relationship is strengthened and somehow sanctified by the absence of the father.

This glorification of the mother as the holy cow of popular cinema expresses many aspects of the crisis of identity that buffets the Indian mind today. I am not going into the psychological theories of the mother complex or the male fear of the power of woman since my concern here is with social transition and the insecurities bred by it. What matters is that this glorification of the mother figure obviously stresses the function of woman as mother rather than as beloved or wife or independent being. It is a way of sanitizing woman and denying her all sexuality.

CHattelizing Modern Women

The popular cinema since the late 1960s has been suspicious of Western, modern ways, and rates the traditional mores above them. Some films go a long way to contrast East and West, such as *Do Raaste*, *An Evening in Paris* and *Purab aur Pachhim*, declaring the East superior and the foreign devil as threatening our home and our integrity. Others, and their name is legion, say the same thing by implication in a sequence or stretch of dialogue here and there. This too is related to the role of woman. The westernized woman, for instance, is admitted mostly at the margins of society — the nightclub singer or bandit, the golden-hearted prostitute living outside mainstream society and therefore well-suited to a sex-and-violence parade. There is the woman doctor or lawyer, a common enough figure, invariably isolated by being placed in the void without family or home. In *Insaaf ka Taraju* (1989), the raped woman (whose daughter is also raped) is a consistently underclad photographic model who, as it were, deserves to be raped anyway. Her lawyer is a woman of unknown mooring and thereby a bird of the same feather.

In the macho-minded films of Amitabh Bachchan, woman, particularly the more modern woman, is treated as chattel. As the bandit Don in the film of the same name, Amitabh says: 'I dislike two kinds of women; the kind that comes to me too easily, and the other kind that takes too long to come.' Girls are shown going to school or college, but there is an ambivalence towards them: educational institutions are playgrounds for lovers' dalliance, not places to study. The homely girl with old-fashioned rural virtues, good at housework, shy and wary of the other sex, is rated higher than the better-educated and independent, even though the incidence of the educated girl in the cinema has increased almost in proportion to real life and women's education is not directly denigrated as such. Widow remarriage may be hinted at, even advocated, as in *Sholay* (1975), but one of them must die so that the marriage does not actually take place.

In *Silsila* (1981), the husband falls in love with another woman but decides, at the moment of truth, that religion and tradition decree that he should remain wedded to his wife even though he will never love her. Thus is the dreaded prospect of divorce, relatively easily granted under present law, kept out of the bounds of reality. Dowry murders abound in parts of northern India, more especially its Hindi belt. The accounts published in the newspapers are tragic and dramatic, and great material for popular cinema; but the subject remains firmly banished from the screen. In the treatment of woman, the popular cinema tolerates an increasing degree of modernity but clearly prefers tradition.

Love and marriage, in the context of the dowry system, are two different things for most people. For the bridegroom, it is a matter of direct economic gain; for the family, it is a means of improving its fortunes. It is a gateway to luxuries — cars, refrigerators, motorbikes, video sets and so forth, all of which are made in the country but lie beyond the reach of the large majority. So if a young man and woman are attracted to each other, that by itself will play a small part in the business of marriage. Apart from problems of caste and horoscopes, the major question will be: 'What will the family make in the deal?'

The fantasy of love on the screen and the reality of dowry murders are in fact the inverse of each other. It is the impracticability of marrying the woman of one's choice after a period of courtship that helps to bring about the element of violence towards women. The more the enactment of love scenes between men and women becomes separated from marriage, the more it becomes illegitimate, as it were, and attracts an element of violence. It is almost as if the young man feels that since it is his duty to use marriage to improve his family's fortunes, why can't he meanwhile have a good time as the heroes have done on the screen? In order not to miss that dimension in his youth, he has to do something, somehow, outside of marriage, regardless of the wishes of the woman who is his target. Even in the 1990s, in a film like *Anjam*, the hero (Shah Rukh Khan) says: 'How can she not love me? She

has got to love me, I will make her love me.' Male-macho cannot imagine being rejected by a mere woman. So the treatment of sex on the screen, its fantasy and arousal effect on sex-starved youth, manifests itself in terms of brutality, molestation and rape, especially among caste Hindus in north-western India where the incidence of dowry violence is at its highest.

Hopefully some of the stereotypes of yesterday may have begun to change in recent hits like *Roja*, *Bombay*, *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* and so on. *Roja* succeeds in evoking a new patriotism in a Kashmir background with conviction. *Bombay* vigorously deals with the hitherto inconceivable theme of a Hindu-Muslim marriage with minor concessions to religious bigotry in the city after which it is named. *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun*'s success lay in drawing huge audiences with an unusually detailed and realistic wedding ceremony lasting two hours out of its duration of three. The first two established the name of the director, Maniratnam, rather more forcefully than usual with Indian commercial cinema; the third attached a new glory to the institution of marriage and created a kind of renewed nostalgia for the traditional way of an ornate wedding celebration in the Hindi heartland. In all three, the songs reinforced the sentiments very ably. These three films, among others, may be more than straws in the wind predicting radical changes in the mores of blockbusting cinema. However, there is as yet no such sign of a sea change; violence escalates merrily and becomes more graphic every year.

CINEMATIC CHIEF MINISTERS

Few events have ever revealed the nexus between culture and politics as dramatically as the coming to power of film stars in two of India's most populous States — Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

Both were the most popular stars of their different language areas; both were at the peak of their popularity at the time they became chief executives of their States. Even when they stopped acting, their films continued to be screened, with revivals orchestrated by themselves. One had made 262 and the other 292 films at the time they became chief ministers. In both cases, it is clear that their political victory was the direct outcome of their screen image. Neither of them was a chief minister who happened to be an actor in the past and was merely using that experience to enhance his public performance as a politician, unlike President Ronald Reagan of the United States, who was never a superstar anyway. The Indian actor-chief ministers became political leaders because they were the superstars of their cinema. Their political personae are extensions of their cinematic selves. This fact must also be considered in the context of the number of cinema theatres in the south (6830 out of the country's total of 12,284 in 1984), which is twice the national average. The bulk of the touring cinemas, which have a higher penetration into the rural areas than the permanent theatres, are also located in the south. The highest number of cinemas is in Tamil Nadu (2136).

followed by Andhra Pradesh (2131). 'No village in Tamil Nadu is so isolated as to be beyond the reach of film.'

'You will forgive me if I am overcome by emotion when I talk of cinema', said N.T. Rama Rao, the chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, at an international film festival in the capital of his state. 'It nurtured, promoted and made me what I am today'. M.G. Ramachandran, chief minister of adjacent Tamil Nadu, could have said the same thing with equal truth.

Tamil Nadu presents a unique case study in the history of cinema as well as of politics. In 1967, when the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) defeated India's ruling political party, the Indian National Congress, the cabinet of ten formed by Chief Minister C.N. Annadurai (1908-69) had nine members from the film industry, including himself. A scriptwriter at a time when his tribe was billed above the director in the titles, Annadurai was the engineer of the cinematic force that laid low the mighty Congress party. 'How can actors run a government?' scoffed Kamaraj, Tamil Nadu's highly capable (and by caste, untouchable) chief minister before the 1967 elections. But the DMK had the last laugh. The cinema had taken over the state. As if to underscore this, Madanapally Gopala Ramachandran, a Keralite of Sri Lankan origin who through 292 films had been the matinee idol of the Tamils for years, became the chief minister in 1977, and, but for a brief interlude, remained so till his death in 1987.

The MGR image was constructed with finesse. Grid by grid the proletariat was systematically covered; there was a film about fishermen (*Padakotti*), another about rickshaw-pullers (*Rickshawakaran*), about the peasant (*Vivasayi*), the carter (*Mattukara Velan*), and the domestic servant (*Neethikkuthallai Vananku*). In each, MGR plays the good man, the Robin Hood, the dispenser of justice, the saviour of the distressed. A maidservant came back home sobbing; she had just seen 'MGR killing a tiger to save his mother's life — in this day and age.' He never entered the grey areas, not to speak of playing the villain or other unfavourable characters. 'Between the mid-1950s and the early 1970s, if MGR played in 100 films, not in one did he die.' In real life, whenever he had a close brush with death, MGR's popularity increased on account of it — first after the incident in which actor M.R. Radha shot and injured him, and then after the illness that took him to Brooklyn Hospital, New York, for treatment in 1983.

Screen populism was steadily supported by real-life paternalism; when there was incessant rain in Chennai, MGR bought raincoats emblazoned with the DMK's rising sun for 600 rickshaw-pullers. A film on the rickshaw-pullers reinforced this charity and boosted the film's sales. He also consistently advocated temperance. His charity, his moral stance and his highly visible and intense party activity conveyed to his public the message that he was more than a film hero. M.G. Ramachandran's 27,000 fan clubs with a membership of 1.5 million provided an important bridge between the actor and the politician. These fan clubs became the party units when MGR broke

away from the DMK and formed the Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (ADMK).

But the godmen of the cinema, accustomed to adoring applause, are as impatient of the courts as they are of the Press. On 27 April 1983, judges of the Madras High Court 'unanimously expressed concern over police surveillance of their movements and activities'. V.M. Tarkunde, an eminent jurist, had been ruthlessly beaten up a few months earlier as he led a peaceful procession of about 40 members of the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) in Madurai in protest against police atrocities in the states.

That the MGR charisma lingered through his prolonged illness and survives his death underscores the power of the illusion he created. His ghost made its presence felt in the Tamil Nadu elections of 1989, with both his wife Janaki and his one-time heroine Jayalalitha claiming his legacy and invoking his memory. To this day, the cinema rules the state; M. Karunanidhi, the present chief minister, is a past scriptwriter.

It was in mythological films that N.T. Rama Rao (NTR) had found his metier. In 1957 he made *Mayabazar* under director K.V. Reddy and went on to act the main roles in *Bhishma* (from the *Mahabharata*), *Dakshayagnam* (a Puranic tale of Shiva) in 1962, then *Lavakusa* (the story of Lav and Kusha, Rama's two sons in the *Ramayana*), *Krishnarjunayuddham* and others drawn from the epics and the Puranas. *Nartanshala* showed Arjuna, the Pandava warrior of the *Mahabharata*, in exile. During the year the Pandavas had to remain incognito at King Virata's court, the great warrior had to don a woman's garb and teach dancing to the princesses at court. In playing this double role, NTR summoned up all his acting prowess and made a success of it.

But it was in his own mythologicals that NTR began to introduce an ideological twist. He made sure of being seen as the saviour; even when he played a traditional villain such as Ravana (whose effigy is burnt as the image of evil during Ramlila celebrations in India's Hindi-speaking belt), the character took on a noble aspect.

A HERO OF THE NEW TIMES

The fundamental difference between the two star-chief ministers and other star-politicians of India lies in the fact that in the case of the former, the films themselves created the politics and the politicians; the latter are merely film stars who decided to move into politics or were persuaded to do so as vote catchers. In the case of Amitabh Bachchan, for instance, the films which made his reputation, instead of helping him now, put him on the defensive. At the elections in Allahabad (his hometown) after the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984, Amitabh's astute opponent Bahuguna, a politician of many years' standing, put up posters showing Amitabh in violent action and asked: 'Is this the man you want to vote for?' The fact that Amitabh won the election

may have been merely a part of the landslide victory of Rajiv Gandhi's party, carried on the double wave of sympathy for his dead mother and enthusiasm for her young son, the reluctant debutant. The fact that almost anyone the party chose won the elections made the worth of the film-star component highly suspect.

Whereas MGR and NTR were projecting the 'saviour' image from the film screen on to real life without disjunction, Amitabh, dressed in flowing white, signifying purity and simplicity and mouthing patriotic sentiments in favour of the Constitution and its upholders, presented an inescapable contradiction between his screen image derived from a long series of films, and the political image he was seeking to project through a newly acquired style of dress and content of speech. 'My own son expects me to fight tigers', he observed, with a clearer understanding of the problem than his formal utterances indicated. As he said: 'I wasn't representing Amitabh Bachchan, Member of Parliament, in *Mard*. It was a typical Manmohan Desai film, not to be taken seriously.'

The 1970s saw the emergence of cynicism on a large scale. The pre-Independence generation had grown old and with it the idealism of the struggle against the British was dying. Even the patriots of old had grown corrupt; they had given a lot, now they wanted their share of the pie, and if possible a bit more. The country was richer but the people poorer. The mask had fallen off the slogan-mouthing politician. People had seen the face of greed in those who were to deliver them from their miseries. Consumer goods production had proliferated; shop windows were full of goods for the burgeoning rich. The majority of urban people, leave alone the rural, could not afford such goods by honest means. The thought arose that nobody was going to give you what you did not grab. To many, therefore, honesty began to seem the virtue of fools. The new times needed a cynical, violent hero, less bothered with love and romance and more with grabbing money and power with his bare hands. It found him in Amitabh Bachchan.

The appeal of violence for the lumpen is a remarkable trait, developed as it is by a member of the intellectual and social elite. Bachchan was educated at Sherwood College, Nainital and later became an executive with the British firm of Bird and Co., Calcutta. The son of the famed Hindi poet Harivanshrai Bachchan, he looked, during Abbas' *Saat Hindustani* and the years immediately following it, like a student out of Tagore's Santiniketan in his white pyjamas and brown kurta. He had found a conduit of identification with the social dropout, the underworld killer, the unemployed and unemployable lumpen whose sole pastime is the cinema where he can find satisfactions that cannot be his in real life. He became the symbol of hope, the model of action for those who feel wronged and denied of opportunities that they vaguely feel are rightfully theirs, whose talents and abilities have been ignored by a ruthless, unfeeling world.

His illness in 1982 brought out the enormous regard in which he is held

by a vast mass of humanity. Millions of boys and girls prayed for his well being. Thousands of people thronged the gates of the hospital where he lay fighting for his life. Like all his fights, he won this one too. After his recovery, he had to give repeated *darshans* (audiences) to the crowds below, like an emperor of old, or a prime politician of today, assuring his people that he was alive and well and would continue to pour his blessings upon them. It was as if his devotees snatched him from the jaws of death, making 1982 the year of Amitabh Bachchan. No other film star in the world commanded a following as wide and as devoted as his at the height of his career. It is not the middle class that has made Bachchan what he is today. It is the plebeians, the lumpen proletariat, that took him to the pinnacle of success.

It is a moot question whether cinematic divinity has a direct psychological link with dictatorship. Gods have little patience with the laws of man. DMK's atheist MGR became God through the exercise of power shown to be invincible in his films; God-playing NTR just slipped into godhood; Amitabh, with his miraculous muscle power, has a simulated divinity. An MGR or an NTR or an Amitabh in power, used to the adulation of the masses praying at their gaudy temples, must find it difficult to accept democratic checks on his actions. Like their followers, they too confuse myth and reality.

THE DIALECT OF POPULAR CINEMA

The bulk of Indian cinema is produced and controlled by a trading community to which the non-commercial aspects of cinema matter little. Also, it has little in common with the rest of the world. India's popular cinema, like the Beijing Opera films, speaks, not in the international language of cinema, but in a local dialect which is incomprehensible to most countries in the world. India's film exports have been traditionally directed at what used to be called the third world, a name that has lost its logic with the collapse of the second world, that is, the Soviet Union and its satellites. Indian films were popular in the USSR; but then what has come out in the wash is that except in defence technology, the USSR was pretty much a third world country. As these countries climb out of this category, the popularity of Indian cinema also wanes; it has waned in South East Asian countries like Thailand, Malayasia and Indonesia, where it once held sway.

Many of these erstwhile importers of Indian cinema in Asia and Africa have begun to make some 'art' films themselves and are condemning Indian cinema as a deleterious influence on public taste. In Mali or Burkina Faso, the new film makers complain bitterly about the overlordship of Indian popular cinema and are struggling to stop its import — with some success. Idrissa Ouedrago in Burkina Faso, one of the poorest countries in the world, is today in the first rank of international cinema as the maker of *Yaaba* and other films that have won top prizes at international film festivals. The main enemy of such film makers is the Indian product because it blocks the entry

of their films by dominating local cinema theatres. Sooner rather than later, this domination will end and leave Indian pop cinema in more splendid isolation than ever. No wonder commercial producers were singularly unexcited about the centenary of cinema. On the other hand, the New Cinema, which quickly acquired pre-eminence as the voice of the most advanced section of the Indian intelligentsia, has always had a strong international orientation even though the human condition in India, particularly the problem of poverty and superstition, has been its major preoccupation in terms of subject matter.

Although small in number, the parallel cinema's ready international acceptability at film festivals and on TV channels and national acclaim (it won the President's Award year after year and goes on doing so), made it a highly influential agency. It quickly became the international arm of Indian cinema and its most prestigious sector within the country, representing the high culture of the elite. At the same time, unlike the popular cinema, it is not escapist; its preoccupations are the same as of the sections of society that lead India politically and socially and determine the future course of the country. Even though it has failed to reach a mass audience, it has had an impact on the leadership.

Thus between its two wings, Indian cinema has achieved both commercial success and a *success d'estime* within the country and abroad.

Here a word should be said about this artificial division between the art film and commercial film. It is a working division imposed upon Indian cinema by the isolation of its mainstream from a universal language. What we call the 'commercial' cinema in India has not produced, as Hollywood did, universal masterpieces of cinema which have had unique commercial and artistic success on an international scale like say the works of John Ford or Alfred Hitchcock or Francis Ford Coppola. Like the Beijing Opera in China, the Indian mainstream cinema speaks a dialect of the universal cinematic language which isolates it within India and other countries with relatively backward or closed societies.

Jean Renoir's dictum is also worth recalling here. In the jargon of cinema, he pointed out, 'a commercial film is not one that brings in money, but a film conceived and executed in accord to the canons of the businessman'. Some of the film industry's most resounding failures fall within the 'commercial' category because they are failures within the formulae of success defined by the industry. It is also well known that the majority of films produced are failures; only a mere handful can be termed 'hits'. Admittedly, the 'hits' make very large amounts of money; but a film like *Pather Panchali* which cost about 1,50,000 rupees and which has over the years brought in fifty times its capital, must be deemed 'non-commercial' because it was made in total defiance of commercial considerations and the money it brought in did not equal the highest incomes of some big hits. This working division between the art and commercial film is a reality with which Indian cinema

has been compelled to live since Independence. Practically all the President's Awards have habitually gone to what the industry would call the 'art' film. The picture is the same in international film festivals abroad.

ISOLATION AND EXPOSURE

One handicap for most film-makers was India's isolation from world currents. In cinema as in everything else, foreign rule made sure of that. The popularity of Indian cinema — the first feature film was made in 1913 — bothered the British so much that they appointed a committee in 1927 to investigate the situation. The British did not like American films either, because they 'showed the white woman in a bad light'. Their aim was to replace both the Indian and the American film by the British product. But the Rangachariar Committee decided that all films from the West were dangerous to Indian morals. The answer, it said, lay in developing an Indian film industry on a firm basis. The result was a spurt in India's production. But, especially with the coming of sound and the raising of the language barrier, Indian cinema grew in a cocoon of its own, sealed off from world currents.

When Independence came in 1947, our ignorance of international cinema was abysmal. Almost no one in the film industry had seen the films of Eisenstein, Pudovkin or Dobzhenko; when Jean Renoir came in 1948, hardly anyone had heard of him; when Pudovkin came in 1951, more people knew him as a member of the Supreme Soviet than as a great film-maker. Only in the tiny conclaves of film societies — barely three in the whole country — was there a dim awareness of the heights that cinema had achieved in France or the USSR, Japan or post-War Italy.

It was India's First International Film Festival in 1952, actively encouraged by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, that suddenly lifted the curtain and revealed to the Indian cineaste the riches of world cinema.

Particularly in the neo-realist cinema of post-War Italy, in the films of de Sica and Rossellini, India saw a powerful reflection of social problems so akin to its own that it could not but be influenced by it. It was however the film society showings that acquainted potential film-makers — a whole generation of them — with the great figures of Soviet cinema. Pudovkin showed his *Storm Over Asia* at the Calcutta Film Society and recounted the story of its making to a mesmerized audience overflowing the Indrapuri studio theatre where the meeting was held. The three major strands that went into the making of new cinema in India were the grassroots realism of post-War Italy, the traditional narrative techniques of Hollywood, and the idealistic power of Soviet cinema, particularly of the 1920s. The fourth, and most important, was the act of a rediscovery of India, whose outcome was revealed through the instruments forged from elements drawn from a wider perception of world cinema.

SATYAJIT RAY AND THE NEW CINEMA

In 1952, the year of the First International Film Festival of India, Satyajit Ray began to work on his historic *Pather Panchali*. Shot at first on week-ends by a team in which no one had any experience, the film embarked middle-class, English-educated India on a Nehruvian discovery of its own country at its poorest levels. Ray's Apu trilogy, which put him on par with the greatest film-makers of the world, traced an arc of development in India, from the impoverished village to the edge of the wide world through the birth, and growth to manhood, of its main character, Apu.

This pure, clear, lyrical vision of a new India awakening from centuries of foreign rule inspired an entire new school of film-making in which realism played an important part. Its technique was outwardly as western as that of the European novel that had inspired Indian fiction in the last 100 years and instilled an Indian soul into a Western form. Ray's irony and compassion are in fact very akin to the writings of Rabindranath Tagore and Bibhutibhusan Bandyopadhyay or R.K. Narayan. From the first two, Ray drew much of his material as well. But this literary inspiration was distilled through a fine cinematic mesh woven of many strands from world cinema, prominent among them the American, the Italian and the Russian. It was also imbued with a very Indian sense of compassion. In his autobiography, Nehru saw the British as victims of destiny much as the Indians they victimized; Satyajit Ray's early films similarly have no villains, only people driven by forces greater than themselves.

Since Ray's debut in 1955, a whole new generation of film-makers has appeared on the scene — one that has set its face against the song-dance-fight-chase-in-defence-of-family formula of the mainstream film industry. Every year, at India's International Film Festival, twenty-one of the best films of the previous year, made in many languages and regions, are shown to the world and to Indians themselves. And year after year, they continue to turn up at least some work of outstanding merit, even though they find it hard to make their way into the exhibition theatres controlled by the film industry. In the making of these films the government, both at the Centre and in the States, has played an important role. The part of *Pather Panchali* that Ray had completed with his own resources was eagerly seen by commercial film producers, but for an agonizing year and a half during which the old woman could have died and the boy and girl might have shot up into adolescence no one came forward to complete it. It was the Government of West Bengal which rescued it from certain death and thereby changed the course of Indian cinema. Today mainly governmental but also some private resources go into the making of this 'new cinema' which runs a parallel course to the big commercial product.

Very often, the films sponsored by government are highly critical of it; indirectly, some of them go to the extent of advocating revolution. Yet they

are equally often awarded prizes by the government they criticize and are sent to foreign film festivals. Jawaharlal Nehru himself had overruled bureaucratic objections to the showing of *Pather Panchali* abroad on the count that the film would project an image of India's poverty. In the event, what Ray films and those of later film-makers cast in that mould have achieved is a significant understanding of India's efforts to overcome its problems. Some of these problems are age-old, some recent, but all result from the confrontation of democratic ideas with a hierarchical, paternalistic concept of society embedded in the dominant Indian tradition.

The impress of Satyajit Ray is still visible in this other cinema; even where it sets up in opposition to him, he remains its point of reference. Most of the new directors control every aspect of their production, write their own scripts, make low-budget films, use little make-up and have a bent towards realism. Even when they go for melodrama, the exterior is realistic. But there is another model: Ritwik Ghatak. A contemporary of Ray, Ghatak's style underwent a sea change after Ray's debut, but in the process became more individual than before. He made only eight films but left an indelible impression on a whole group of talented film-makers who came under his spell. Unlike Ray, he approached his subject with absolute directness and made effective use of melodrama as also of traditional myths to express a revolutionary urge.

At the end of *Meghae Dhaka Tara* (A Star Obscured by Clouds), the long-suffering woman who has given the best years of her life to keep the family going and now drifts towards death, cries out: 'I want to live' and her voice echoes in the mountains. Ray would never have done that. In this respect Ghatak comes somewhat closer to Raj Kapoor, Guru Dutt, Mehboob Khan and others of the last glorious chapter of India's popular cinema in the 1950s. However, Ghatak's individuality is very marked and his work cannot be equated with anyone else's. He also had the advantage of a contact with world cinema that the previous generation had been denied in its formative years.

Another contemporary of Ray, making up the trio of Bengal's film-makers who dominated the 1960s, is Mrinal Sen. Here again we find a film-maker who worked in a traditional mould transformed by the experience of Ray's early work, but not imitating him. But it was not really until his eleventh film that Mrinal Sen came into his own in *Bhuvan Shome* (1969). The slight story of a pompous railway official humbled by a young village girl came as a breath of fresh air after the grand seriousness of Ray and the intense passion of Ghatak. Sen's middle period is full of inventive expressions of his Marxist content, in which his delight with the medium has an infectious freshness. Of late, he has moved away from his experiments with de-dramatization towards an individual style of narrative cinema. The subject he constantly explores is the middle class mind. In *Ek din Pratidin* (A Quotidian Day, 1979) he exposes the hypocrisies under which a family dependent on the daughter's income hide their vulnerable selves. One night the girl is late

coming back from work and is thus morally suspect before the family and the neighbours. The family secretly worries even about the possible marriage which might remove the mainstay of their lives. Sen uncovers this material with a searing forthrightness, especially through the talented actress Srila Mazumdar, who plays the younger daughter of the family.

A RISING WAVE

In the 1970s, a new initiative came up in the southern states of Karnataka followed by Kerala and Maharashtra. The first landmark in the south appeared in Karnataka with Pattabhi Rama Reddy's *Samskara* (Funeral Rites, 1970) which deals with a convoluted debate among Brahmins over the proper burial of one of their set who has violated their creed. The Brahmin faces could have come from the tenth century; their movements have a spectacular, sometimes Japanese-like formality tensed by conflicts arising within and without. Karnataka's flowering did not last long; but while it was there, Girish Karnad's *Kaadu* (The Forest, 1973), B.V. Karanth's *Chomana Dudi* (Choma's Drum, 1975) and Girish Kasaravalli's *Ghatashraddha* (The Ritual, 1977), Prema Karanth's *Phaniyamma* (1983) continued its concern with the nature of tradition and oppression in rural society.

In neighbouring Kerala, two towering yet vastly different talents appeared in Adoor Gopalakrishnan and G. Aravindan. The first is a social analyst with a fine sense of time, place and action and a great economy of means; the latter, a pure poet whose social comment lies buried under a spectacular imagery. In Gopalakrishnan's *Mukhamukham* (Face to Face, 1984) the dramatic return of a missing trade union hero is hailed by the party, but when his abandonment of ideals becomes apparent to his followers they kill him and make him a martyr locked in his glorious past. The overpowering silence of the returned hero has a great disturbing quality. Aravindan's *Oridath* (1986) records the coming of electricity to a village with extraordinary insights. It ends in the accidental electrocution of a boy which turns into a metaphor of man's divorce from nature and his destruction in an atomic cataclysm.

G. Aravindan died early but not before he had left the mark of a fine sensibility close to nature and man in films like *Thampu* (The Tent) about an itinerant village circus and *Pokku Veyil* (Twilight) about the extreme sensitivity of a young man which made him a lunatic in the eyes of society. If Aravindan was primarily a poet, Gopalakrishnan is an intellectual who continues to turn out strong films with an apparent inscrutability charged with political nuances, often structured around an absence, as in *Elip-pathayam* (The Rat-Trap) and *Mukhamukham* (Face to Face). The first portrays the helplessness of the idle rich landlord in the face of change; the second tears the mask of false, idealized consistency from the face of the Marxist who, as a human being, is as subject to change as anyone else.

In Mumbai, Shyam Benegal made his mark with a remarkably mature first film, *Ankur* (The Seedling); its original screenplay, written by the director, is finely proportioned and has a strong structure based on a keen understanding of the rural realities of its region. The film was also distinguished by the debut of actress Shabana Azmi and a team of new performers who have reappeared in a series of Benegal films over the years. *Manthan* (The Churning) set out to be something of a promotional film for the milk co-operative movement and ended up by being much more. It has a warmth, freshness and charm rarely brought to bear on such material. Both in *Manthan* and in *Susman* (1985) Benegal shows an astonishing ability to turn the stuff of documentary into lively fiction. The situation of the dairy farmers in the first and of traditional textile-weavers in the second succeeds in orchestrating the many strands of economic, social, and personal reality into human drama. His prolific work took a dip for a while after his first four films, but he seems to have discovered a new well of creativity in himself in recent years.

In *Bhumika* (The Role), another film with a fine, spontaneous flow, Smita Patil emerged as one of the important acting talents of the new cinema and continued to act, like Azmi, both in blockbusters and the low-budget serious-creative films. Benegal made liberal use of playwright Vijay Tendulkar, bringing a powerful new force into film writing. Music director Vanraj Bhatia, perhaps India's only professionally trained 'composer', came into his own in a number of fine scores for the films of Shyam Benegal, who thus expanded the scope and capabilities of the new cinema in many directions at once. In *The Making of the Mahatma*, his film on Gandhi in Africa, he expertly recreated Gandhi's formative years and paid his tribute to the architect of India's independence.

Many of the new directors came from the Film Institute — Saeed Mirza, Mani Kaul and Kumar Shahani in Maharashtra, Ketan Mehta in Gujarat, Adoor Gopalakrishnan in Kerala, Girish Kasaravalli in Karnataka, Nirad Mahapatra in Orissa, K. Hariharan in Tamil Nadu, Jahn timer Barua in Assam and so on. Saeed Mirza's *Albert Pinto Ko Gussa Kyon Ata Hai* (Why Does Albert Pinto Get Angry?) captured the piquant sensitivity of a Goan Christian motor mechanic in Mumbai and ends with a Brechtian Marxist homily. Different in approach but similarly Brechtian in spirit was Ketan Mehta's *Bhavni Bhavai* (A Folk Tale) which used a traditional Gujarati folk form to make a sharp comment on the continuing oppression of the 'untouchable' communities through a comical song and dance format.

In 1984, Nirad Mahapatra marked Orissa's entry into the scene with a highly sensitive, tranquil but moving portrait of a family in transition in *Maya Miriga* (Illusion). In faraway Manipur, a small state in the mountain fastnesses of north-eastern India, Aribam Syam Sharma made a remarkable debut with a technically naive but deeply moving *Imagi Ningthem* (My Son, My Love) which won national and international acclaim. He then went on to make a series of compelling films.

The 'new cinema' thus became a wave rising along a wide front all over India, no longer confined to industrially advanced states. It represents a substantial body of new talent devoted to the exploration of the values of a traditional society in the grip of rapid change. From Satyajit Ray to Nirad Mahapatra, it is a highly bi-cultural product, its makers as sensitive to tremors in world cinema as to their own country's agonies. The language of cinema it speaks is familiar to informed film audiences of the West; yet its voice is new and fresh and commands attention. The new cinema is thus the voice of modern India, Western in its inflections like the vast wealth of fiction in Indian languages created in the aftermath of British conquest, but deeply concerned with the development of Indian tradition towards viability and relevance in the modern world. This bi-cultural synthesis has assured its acceptance in industrially advanced countries; it is authentic and accessible to audiences in Europe and America, in Australia and Japan.

Some film-makers are trying to break out of the middle-class film buff environment and seeking a middle ground where they can claim a share of the vast audience of the commercial cinema even if this somewhat dilutes their purity. Some like Benegal and Govind Nihalani (*Aakrosh* and *Ardh-satya*), did achieve notable success in creating what some critics have described as 'middle cinema' — another aspect of the cinema's effort, at all levels, from the most commercial to the most purist, to come to terms with the problems of tradition and change in contemporary India. But of late the governmental initiative seems to have petered out and the vice-like grip of the commercial cinema on the release theatres has made it impossible for the parallel cinema to get a foothold in the box office, and it now faces a rather bleak future.

M.C. JOSHI

Archaeology: Filling the Blanks

India's Independence on 15 August 1947 was accompanied by the country's tragic partition. As a result India suffered the loss of several significant palaeolithic sites, representing the prehistoric Sohan culture, and areas of Baluchistan, Sind and Punjab containing early Copper-Age settlements and ancient burials, remains of the Indus Valley Civilization and centres of Gandhara school of Buddhist art and architecture besides several early historical and medieval monuments in Sind, Punjab and eastern Bengal.

In terms of scientific investigations, cultural studies and preservation of monuments and remains, archaeology was already a developed discipline in India at the time of Independence. Yet many academic problems like the chronological gaps in the sequence of cultures through the ages or issues pertaining to the so-called dark ages confronted Indian archaeologists at that time. In other words, there were many neglected areas of Indian archaeology pertaining to prehistoric, protohistoric and historical studies especially pertaining to their regional growth, which needed investigation. Indeed, until the early years of Indian Independence little was known in India about the details of Stone Age or the neolithic or chalcolithic cultures, particularly of the post-Harappan types about the nature of Iron Age developments in archaeological terms, or about ancient and medieval Indian architecture in relation to the Vastu tradition.

Since the laws of British India did not apply to the princely states which were incorporated into India after Independence, the legislation pertaining to archaeology was found to be inadequate for the control and management of archaeological pursuits and preservation of monuments and sites and remains. The enlightened framers of the Indian Constitution, therefore, placed archaeology in the Concurrent List making it thereby a Central as well as a State subject which resulted in the expansion of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) on the one hand and establishment of Departments of Archaeology in every state on the other. As a consequence of these developments a new law 'Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act' was passed in 1958 by the Parliament and thereafter, various Indian states also enacted their own archaeological legislation in course of time.

The Antiquity Export Control Act was enacted in 1948 to control the illegal export of antiquities. It was later replaced by the more elaborate Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972. Thanks to the encouragement given by the Government of India, particularly to the ASI and the State

Governments, the teaching of archaeology in the universities was much strengthened. Educational institutions which taught Indian archaeology as a subject, became more active and new universities introduced archaeology as a subject at the post-graduate level. Scientific investigations and field-work on a variety of archaeological subjects, antiquities and remains were also taken up by well-known institutions, including many universities, as well as individual experts. Thus, the post-Independence period, witnessed archaeological studies taking long strides with a multidisciplinary approach, adding much to our knowledge and helping in the reconstruction of lost and forgotten cultures.

Many universities, where archaeology was introduced as a subject at the post-graduate level, also carried out field studies. In this respect the universities deserving mention include those of Calcutta, Patna, Allahabad, Aligarh, Sagar, Vadodara, Pune, Mysore and Chennai. Deccan College Post-Graduate Research Institute, Pune, got vigorously involved in archaeological investigations and training programmes and contributed immensely to original research under one of the great archaeologists of the country, late Prof. H.D. Sankalia and scores of his students. An important development in the area of scientific archaeology was the establishment in Mumbai in 1961 of the first Radio Carbon Laboratory under the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research. It helped the assessment of chronology by establishing dates. Well-known institutions like the Anthropological Survey of India, Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad, and Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeobotany, Lucknow, and other scientific agencies and experts helped in archaeological research by carrying out scientific investigations in related fields.

During 1962 the Government of India set up a School (now Institute) of Archaeology in New Delhi under the ASI for imparting comprehensive training to the younger generation of archaeologists in all important branches of the subject. Many of its former trainees and students have become well-known for their rich contribution to Indian archaeology.

All this enabled experts at the ASI, State Departments of Archaeology and some of the universities and associated institutions to take up the challenging task of solving the outstanding problems of Indian archaeology. Over a period of time their exhaustive field-work, minute observations and in-depth studies and analyses have bridged the cultural gaps to a considerable extent and helped in the chronological reconstruction of Indian archaeology covering almost the entire country. For planning and programming of various archaeological pursuits at the initial stage, A. Ghosh, Director General, ASI, in the 1950s and 1960s, and his colleagues also deserve credit. During the last fifty years in gradual stages, over a thousand field investigations including explorations and excavations by archaeologists and their associates have been carried out resulting in the collection of voluminous archaeological data pertaining to various regions from the Stone Age to the medieval period. With a view to assessing the tremendous progress made by Indian archaeology

in different areas of the discipline, it is proposed to highlight the most notable discoveries from Stone Age onwards.

PALAEOLITHIC AND MESOLITHIC FINDS

In post-Independence India significant work was carried out on the Stone Age in Kashmir where H.D. Sankalia (Deccan College) and his two colleagues (from ASI) made the first discovery of palaeolithic tools in 1969. This was followed by further investigations by R.V. Joshi (ASI) and D.P. Agrawal (Physical Research Laboratory) and their teams which threw interesting light on palaeoclimatic conditions of the region and the Pleistocene glaciation sequence. On the basis of radio-carbon dated pollen sequence, G. Singh and D.P. Agrawal felt that deglaciation had started in Kashmir around 18000 BC and in their view the pollen profiles indicated that with the deglaciation in this area a cold-warm-cold climatic sequence started. R.K. Pant and Sardarjit (ASI) found pre-Sohan flakes and early Sohan pebble tools from terraces of Ravi in Kathua district near Jammu.

In Himachal Pradesh, including the Sivalik area of the Punjab, palaeoliths were collected from the terraces of Beas, Banganga and Sirsa rivers by B.B. Lal (ASI) and G.C. Mohapatra (Punjab University). R.V. Joshi (ASI) also conducted studies on the terrace formations in Kangra valley and was of the view that their formation is on account of a fluvio-glacial deposit and these are **not directly connected with glaciation.**

Close to New Delhi, a sprawling palaeolithic factory site at Arangapur on a palaeo-channel of river Yamuna in a hilly area of Faridabad district in Haryana was exposed by A.K. Sharma (ASI). The site yielded early and late Acheulian tools made of sandstone and fine grained quartzite in a stratified context.

Palaeoliths have also been found in Uttar Pradesh after 1947 by K.P. Nautiyal (Garhwal University) in Alaknanda area; on the sacred Govardhan hill in Mathura district and Deogarh in Lalitpur district by R.V. Joshi and M.C. Joshi (ASI). G.R. Sharma (Allahabad University) and his associates explored in the Vindhyan belt within Allahabad, Mirzapur and Sonbhadra districts and in their vicinity in Belan and Son valleys and discovered early palaeolithic hand-axes, middle palaeolithic scrapers and points and upper palaeolithic blades and burins. In the same context, he found a bone figurine of a mother-goddess datable (Carbon-14) to *circa* 18000 BC. Some lower, middle and upper palaeolithic sites were also explored by Rakesh Tiwari and Amar Singh (UP State Archaeology) in Mirzapur district besides micro-liths and certain important painted rock-shelters.

The most significant among the finds of G.R. Sharma and his team members — R.K. Varma, B.B. Mishra, J.N. Pande, and J.N. Pal — were obtained from sites like Chopani Mando, Sarai Nahar Rai, Damdama and Mahadaha. At Chopani Mando in Allahabad district were noticed tool

deposits from the Upper Palaeolithic in the Pota-Nal-Jata-Ajmer sequence. This is well known also concerning post-Pot-Nal-Jata and there. The date of the use of microliths was observed at the same. At Sarai, Sarai Kae were found microlithic industries associated found a room together with fifteen graves containing human skeletons, showing evidence of the utilisation of bones. The graves were found in a row of a low wall of a room. The microliths found here were of the same type as those found in the Pot-Nal-Jata district, mesolithic habitation was found from a number of graves belonging to various phases of occupation. A number of human bones, human bones, mandibles and hammer stones, bone, carnelian, and copper, metal and so on. At in Sarai Nal-Jata the remains of the microlithic phase, microlithic tools and butchered animal bones and hearths were found at Mahadafia also in Pratapgarh district. Sharma's team discovered and painted rock shelters in Kaimur hills in Allahabad and Mirzapur districts.

Certain areas of Rajasthan have also yielded both lower and middle palaeolithic implements consisting of hand axes, cleavers, choppers and chopping tools and smaller implements like flakes, points, blades and scrapers from river basins of Mewar and Kota area. Acheulian tools have been found in Jaipur, Bundi and Awar districts and other areas. V.N. Mishra and S.N. Ranguru and their colleagues of the Deccan College, Pune, have carried out interesting investigations in Rajasthan especially on Stone Age sand-dunes of Didwana area in Nagaur district. The sites in the area yielded lithic implements made of quartz and quartzite, comprising flakes, blades, cores besides a scraper and a chopping tool and also middle and early upper palaeolithic artefacts. A primary occupation site was noticed at Sing-Talay close to Didwana containing Acheulian industry. The stratigraphy of the dunes, according to the investigators, displayed evidence of major and minor wet climatic phases. It was also observed that while Acheulian sites were mainly confined to the semi and eastern margin of the Thar desert, middle palaeolithic sites were observed even in its western part, and mesolithic sites of early Holocene were abundant almost in the entire region.

In Rajasthan, habitation deposits of some microlith-using communities were unearthed by V.N. Mishra (Deccan College) and Vijaya Kumar (Rajasthan Department of Archaeology) at Bagor in Bhilwara district and Tilwara in Barmer district associated with pottery. At the former site was also revealed a human burial. The pottery of the early phase was ill-baked. Mesolithic rock paintings were also located in several shelters in Alwar, Jaipur and Pali districts in Rajasthan by P.L. Chakravarti and Vijaya Kumar (Rajasthan Department of Archaeology).

Early, middle and upper palaeolithic tools were found in Gujarat from Sabarmati gravel conglomerate, some areas in Orsong valley, and terraces of river Bhadar in Saurashtra besides the area between Kutch and Gulf of Cambay. At Loteshwar in Mehsana district of Gujarat, V.S. Parikh and V.H. Sonavane (M.S. University, Vadodara), dug a mesolithic deposit

underlying a chalcolithic level preserving two human burials. V.H. Sonavane also excavated a rock-shelter in Mahesvara hill in Panchamahals district containing mesolithic material.

During the post-Independence period, the field-work in Madhya Pradesh has proved the richness of the state in Stone Age sites, specimens of rock-art and so on. All the major river valleys in Madhya Pradesh like Chambal, Berwa, Son and Narmada have yielded palaeolithic implements in the course of explorations. Notable sites excavated in Central India include Bhimbethka, internationally known for its painted rock-shelters of prehistoric affinity. The digging here by V.N. Mishra (Deccan College) and V.S. Wakankar (Ujjain University), revealed that initially the occupants of the site employed Acheulian tools but subsequently replaced them by microliths of mesolithic affiliation. R.V. Joshi (ASI) excavated rock-shelters at Adamgarh in Hoshangabad district and recovered geometric microliths, a rudimentary type of pottery and animal bones besides some palaeoliths in deeper levels.

Perhaps, the most outstanding discovery after Independence was that of a fossilized skull cap of early Man from the basal conglomerate horizon of the Narmada valley alluvial deposits near Hathnora village in Hoshangabad district, Madhya Pradesh, in 1982. It was found by Arun Sankea of the Geological Survey of India (GSI). Associated with Lower Palaeolithic Age, the skull cap seems to be that of an advanced specimen of *Homo erectus*.

Another notable find brought to light by R.K. Varma of Rewa University was an octagonal enclosure of stone blocks belonging to Acheulian culture at Maihar in Satna district. He also found at the site middle palaeolithic and upper palaeolithic implements. Subsequently, J.N. Pande and J.N. Pal (Allahabad University) also excavated this site and found a microlithic industry. V.N. Mishra, S.N. Rajguru and R.K. Ganju of Deccan College, Pune, conducted geo-archaeological and prehistoric studies at a middle palaeolithic site at Samnapur in Narsingpur district. S.B. Ota (ASI) excavated Balwara in East Nimar district with a view to understanding the quarternary landscape environment of the area. The site also contained an Acheulian deposit. Under a project related to Taphonomy and Palaeo-ecology of central Narmada valley, Dr G.L. Badam and his team members carried out detailed investigations in the area and located palaeolithic and microlithic implements in a stratified context. An interesting site has been brought to our notice by V.N. Mishra (Deccan College) at Kirandul in Bastar district, wherein the Mesolithic man seems to have exploited iron ore for tool-making.

Palaeolithic tools have been located in eastern India by Indian explorers like B.P. Sinha (Patna University), Sitaram Roy (Bihar State Government), A.K. Ghosh (Calcutta University) and G.C. Mohapatra (Punjab University). These have been found mainly in the hilly areas of south Bihar, particularly in Chhota Nagpur plateau, and in the districts of Midnapur, Purulia, Bankura and Birbhum in West Bengal and parts of Orissa.

However, the notable archaeological work in eastern India relating to

the Stone Age was undertaken by Vidula Jaiswal and P.C. Pant of Benaras Hindu University through their excavations at Paisra in Munghyr district in Bihar resulting in the exposure of an Acheulian settlement. The human occupation at Paisra comprised several floors and stone alignments.

Palaeoliths were found by Sankalia and experts of Gauhati University in Garo Hills in the north-east at a site at Thebrongiri near Tura. Two Stone Age sites at Mokbol Abri and Mishimagiri (Meghalaya) were located by T.C. Sharma of Gauhati University. Between 1976-9, R.V. Joshi and S.N. Rajguru (Deccan College) undertook a geo-archaeological Survey of Garo Hills including Simsong valley where H.C. Sharma and S.K. Roy found pebble choppers at Nangolbibra. Palaeoliths have also been reported from Arunachal and Manipur.

Vigorous field-work, conducted in eastern and western Deccan (Maharashtra) and south India by Deccan College, ASI, and other agencies, has resulted in the location of several prehistoric sites providing us a clearer picture of Stone Age chronology, palaeolithic man and his environment. Among these sites, some preserved the features of tool production centres belonging to lower, middle and upper Palaeolithic Age in Maharashtra. Of the important excavated sites, Chirki Nala in Ahmadnagar district of Maharashtra yielded lower and middle palaeolithic artefacts and Dangankodi in Parbhani district revealed middle Stone Age floors. Chirki was excavated by Professor Sankalia's team while Dangankodi by S.N. Raghunath (ASI). Besides, R.V. Joshi, S.N. Rajguru, M.D. Kajale, G.L. Badam and M.S. Ghatge of Deccan College, Pune, carried out geomorphological and geochronological studies in certain areas of Maharashtra bringing to light interesting details.

As a result of extensive field-work in parts of southern region, namely Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, many palaeolithic and later sites were discovered. K. Paddayya (Deccan College) studied two Acheulian localities at Islampur and Devapur in Raichur district in Karnataka and located occupational floors. S.N. Rajguru carried out geomorphological investigations an Acheulian site in Almatti in Bijapur district, with a view to determining the geological context of the Acheulian artefacts. Detailed studies were also undertaken by K. Paddayya at Hunsginulla in Gulbarga district to ascertain the stratigraphic position of the tools; he suggested that the blade industry of the area chronologically belonged to early part of Holocene. During an excavation at Husangi, he located an alignment of granite blocks slightly above the occupational level and indicated that this might have been used by Acheulian folk as a camp site. Archaeologists of the Andhra Pradesh Department of Archaeology have also found palaeoliths at Kallur and Dakkili in Nellore district and Timmapalem in Prakasam district.

Archaeological investigations by M.L.K. Murty (Deccan College) in the valleys of Bahuda and Panchu rivers and by R.V. Joshi and K.D. Banerjee (ASI) in the valley of Suvarnamukhi river, in the districts of Chittoor, Adilabad, Karimnagar, Cuddapah, Prakasam and Guntur in Andhra Pradesh

have resulted in the discovery of early and middle Stone Age tools. M. K. Murty also studied and reported extensive faunal remains from upper palaeolithic caves in Kurnool district and bone implements assigned to the upper palaeolithic horizon from another cave in the same district. K. D. Banerjee (ASI) excavated Battalavaham in Chittoor district and found a lithic industry belonging to a transitional horizon between middle and late Stone Age. R. Subrahmanyam (ASI) excavated palaeolithic tools at Nagarjunakonda in Guntur district.

Lithic implements have been found from several areas of Tamil Nadu, including Madurai. An important site in the state was Atturampakam, excavated by K. D. Banerjee. It yielded along with older rotted forms some advanced Acheulian flakes and cores. He also found post-Acheulian industries developing into a microlithic one at a rock-shelter at Gudiyam, Chengalpattu district.

T. V. Mahalingam (Madras University) discovered pebble and flake tools along the northern bank of Kallar river in North Arcot district. H. D. Sankar (Deccan College) identified and studied three kinds of teris, young, semi-old and old in Kanyakumari district. He was of the view that rock formations from Chennai (Madras) and Bangalore in the north to Kanyakumari in the south were found to contain weathered quartz, which served as the chief raw material for making implements by the microlithic people of the teris.

P. Rajendran (Deccan College) discovered in the Bhavani river basin in Palaghat district, Kerala, six mesolithic sites, the microlithic industry being non-geometric and aceramic. In the same district he and R. V. Joshi located quartz flakes, cores, choppers and blades near Malampuzha. He dug mesolithic artefacts in a rock-shelter at Tenmalai in Pattanamthitta district, also in Kerala.

NEOLITHIC DISCOVERIES

Neolithic implements were doubtless discovered in abundance as stray archaeological finds. Hardly anything, however, was known in pre-1947 India about the cultures associated with them. Increased field activity in various parts of the country led to the location of four principal neolithic areas — (i) Kashmir Valley in the north; (ii) Bihar, especially southern part including Chhota Nagpur area, and parts of West Bengal and Orissa; (iii) Assam and neighbouring hilly areas of north-east including Sikkim; and (iv) Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu.

Of scores of neolithic sites discovered in Kashmir, two, namely Burzahom in Srinagar and Gufkral in Pulwama district, have been excavated by T. N. Khazanchi and A. K. Sharma of the ASI respectively. At Burzahom neolithic cultures were succeeded by a local megalithic culture bearing in the upper levels remains of early historical period.

The remains of the first neolithic phase at Burzahom are marked by the

pieces of large stones are associated by some with appearance of a civilisation. The rounded and flattened pebbles, bones and ground shells were sometimes polished and made into the rounded plates or needles. Tools would using microliths were composed of flint, bone and stone implements continued in the form of the plates as well as two pieces of microliths and made a digging stone and a stone hammer were also found. At Chirand, however, there is found a pre-neolithic phase of tool-making representing the early flintware and chertware being similar to Buxar ware. He also found evidence of the use of microliths and bone by primitive people who hunted domesticated animals as well.

Neolithic pottery was discovered at Birpur by A. C. Karmar Purand and B.N. Varma (Chief of the State Department of Archaeology) at Farakka in Ganga delta and Chirand in Senapati district respectively. At Chirand, successive cultures from a neolithic to a historical period through chalcolithic and Iron Age and later historical periods up to Pala period were found. The most features of the neolithic period at this site were the availability of microlithic tools, i.e. a hammer stone and bone arrow heads, points and so on, along with hand-made pottery represented by burnished red and grey ware and some coarse impressed shreds. Discovery of burnt clay chunks indicated that the neolithic folk lived in wattle and daub houses.

Chirand was known till 1908 as a chalcolithic site but, subsequently, deep digging revealed, in the lowest level, interesting neolithic vestiges represented by a variety of tools and ornaments of bones and ground shells and other artefacts in stone besides microliths and handmade pottery with the evidence of the use of wheat (*triticum monie*) and barley. Available C-14 dates for neolithic culture at Chirand fall between 1900 B.C. and 1300 B.C. At Senuwar in Rohas district, B.P. Singh (Banaras Hindu University), exposed a neolithic phase almost resembling the one at Chirand.

Neoliths were also discovered in other parts of Bihar, especially at several sites in Samaya Valley including a promising site near Saraikalla and at Sini in Singhbhum district explored by D. Sen and A. Ghosh (Calcutta University) who also found neoliths in certain areas in Bankura, Burdwan, Midnapur and Darjeeling districts of West Bengal. Two important sites, Kuchai in Mayurbhanj district and Golbai Sasan in Puri district, yielding neoliths were subjected to excavation in Orissa. At Kuchai, B.K. Thapar (ASI) found two distinct cultural periods of which the top one revealed neolithic artefacts and an associated coarse grit-tempered red ware. The lower deposit contained only non-geometric microlithic implements. The other site, Golbai Sasan, where B.K. Sinha (ASI) exposed three occupational periods, had, in Period I, hand-made reed-impressed pottery besides, in a few cases, wheel made shards and some worked bone pieces. Period II A contained polished stone tools with bone and copper implements and a bangle, fish-hook and rings of copper, unveiling chalcolithic attestation along with black-and-red and handmade wares. Period II B yielded material similar to II A, along with an iron celt.

In north-eastern India M.C. Goswami and T.C. Sharma of Gauhati University excavated Deojali Hading in North Cachar Hills district of Assam and obtained neolithic artefacts associated with an ill-fired coarse pottery. Sharma, who later on worked at this site, classified the phases from lower to upper levels as Haobinhion, early neolithic, late neolithic and a neolithic. According to available data, the neolithic man lived here in mud houses and used thick cord-impressed grey ware and a well-fired red ware. The implements found comprised celts, chisels, shouldered axes, adzes, stone querns, mullers and so on. The cultural assemblage shows some affinity with South-East Asia, according to the excavator. S.N. Rao dug Sarutaru near Shillong and found nine ground axes made of slate or sandstone of which seven were of shouldered variety and two of rounded-butt type associated with ill-fired, handmade cord-impressed ware.

K.D. Banerjee and A.K. Sharma (ASI) explored the Sikkim region and found interesting neolithic implements of which harvester seems to be similar to those of the Kashmir valley.

Neolithic implements have also been excavated from other areas of the north-east like Arunachal, Manipur, Tripura and Nagaland. O.K. Singh (Government of Manipur) excavated Napalik in Manipur and found ground triangular celts, edge-ground knives, perforator, net sinkers and so on, with microlithic tools. Singh assigned 1450 BC as the date of this neolithic settlement.

Post-1947 field studies show that the north-eastern neolithic cultures were more closely connected with the neolithic movement of the mainland with only partial impact from South-East Asia.

Much field-work has been done during the last fifty years by archaeologists in neolithic south India throwing light on the earliest farmers of the area and domestication of animals. The variety of neolithic artefacts collected from southern sites consisted mainly of axes, mostly of the triangular type, adzes, chisels, picks, querns, pounders and so on. In many cases, these showed connection with chalcolithic cultures but generally these are succeeded by megalithic cultures. Among notable excavated neolithic sites mention may be made of Nagarjunakonda in Guntur district, and ash mounds at Palavoy of Anantapur district in Andhra Pradesh; Tekkalkota and Sangankallu in Bellary district, T. Narasipur in Mysore district and Hallur in Dharwar district in Karnataka; and Paiyampalli in Tamil Nadu. At Sangankallu and Palavoy, microlithic tools preceded the neolithic tools. But in most of the neolithic settlements the presence of microlithic implements with some refinement continued. The pottery mainly represented handmade burnished ware and sometimes red ware; however, certain pots had paintings in black. At some sites like Nagarjunakonda, two types of burials associated with neolithic culture have also been reported. The site was excavated by R. Subrahmanyam (ASI).

M.S. Nagaraja Rao and Z.D. Ansari (Deccan College) found pre-neolithic deposit at Sangankallu where the neolithic habitation was characterized by

circular burials, one of which had inside a hearth, a storage jar and some neolithic implements. The associated pottery was pale grey and burnished grey ware. In the next phase was noticed intrusion of wheel-made pottery in black painted red ware besides a few bone tools and figurines of bull in terracotta. The top levels of this phase overlapped with megalithic black and red ware.

In the excavations conducted by M.S. Nagaraja Rao at Tekkalkota, neolithic deposits also contained bone and stone tools including blades, burnished grey ware, gold ornaments, beads of semi-precious stones, a copper axe, and fractional burials in the early phase. In the later phase were found circular houses, extended burials, copper objects and a small quantity of black painted red ware. Ground stone axes and blades continued. White-painted black and red bowls were also recovered from a burial. M.S. Nagaraja Rao also exposed two neolithic phases at Hallur of which the lower one was characterized by coarse black, pale grey and burnished wares occasionally painted in red ochre besides ground implements. The upper neolithic (or the chalcolithic) phase was distinguished by the occurrence of blades of chert and copper implements like axes. While the earlier ceramic tradition continued to a limited degree, a few shards of black-painted red ware were also noticed. Under a house floor a double pot burial with the remains of a child were also exposed. The top levels showed overlap of black-and-red ware with iron implements side by side with neolithic tools. M. Seshadri (State Department of Archaeology) found at T. Narasipur intrusive presence of Jorwe Ware from Maharashtra amid neolithic culture towards the upper levels.

At Gandluru in Guntur district, Andhra Pradesh, B.R. Subrahmanyam (Nagarjuna University, Guntur), laid bare a neolithic habitation consisting of three cultural phases showing pit dwellings with handmade pottery and cut cattle bones, mullers, querns and a ground axe in Phase I and regular houses, neolithic tools and a copper wire in Phase II; and presence of shards of megalithic black and red with neolithic material in Phase III.

V.R. Reddy of the Deccan College (Pune), excavated some ash mounds at Palavoy and located relics of a pre-neolithic, a neolithic and a post-neolithic period containing, respectively, trap flakes and microliths, neolithic floors with post-holes, ground bone axes, stone implements and urn burial and evidence of iron along with some remains of houses. B. Narasimhaiah (ASI) excavated a significant site at Ramapuram in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh where he found over a microlithic level, a proto-chalcolithic culture represented by handmade wares and microliths and a copper piece followed by a regular chalcolithic deposit with some black-and-red ware which was topped by specimens of a megalithic culture with iron and copper objects in the last phase.

S.R. Rao of the ASI carried out excavations at Paiyampalli in North Arcot district of Tamil Nadu, exposing two cultural periods. Of these, the lower one represented neolithic occupation with usual features, namely, neolithic stone and bone implements, handmade burnished grey ware, rammed-gravel

floors. The succeeding culture was associated with megalithic habitation. In one of the trenches, neolithic culture overlapped with megalithic cultural elements. The main features of Period II were four successive floors showing the presence of iron objects and black-and-red ware although there was some continuation of neolithic artefacts, pottery and so on.

Thus, the field studies undertaken so far have shown that the neolithic cultures of south India also had some interaction with people knowing the use of copper, succeeded in most cases by megalithic cultures which were marked by certain specific styles of the disposal of the dead. The neolithic communities domesticated animals and practised some agriculture, according to the data unearthed.

THE AGE OF COPPER: HIGHLIGHTS

Knowledge about a pan-Indian Copper Age, except for a few Harappan sites in Punjab and Sind and the hill cultures of Baluchistan and Brahmgiri, the latter in Karnataka, was absolutely limited before 1947. Excavations of ancient sites during the last five decades revealed numerous Copper Age settlements in nearly the whole of north, east, west and parts of south India. An interesting characteristic revealed in respect of the Copper Age was that the copper-using communities belonged to several cultural groups and also used microlithic implements especially blades, scrapers and points and therefore, technically they have also been styled as chalcolithic.

Earliest Copper Age sites in India were located by A. Ghosh (ASI) in the course of his vigorous explorations in search of Harappan settlements on the Indian side in the desert belt of Rajasthan during 1950-3. Resultantly, he discovered Harappan as well as other sites successfully, Kalibangan being one of them.

Many non-Harappan chalcolithic settlements were found on excavation to be below the Harappan level. Therefore, Indian archaeologists designated them as 'pre-Harappan', the emergence of which has been roughly dated to about the beginning of the third millennium BC or even a little bit earlier. These cultures seem to have had their origin in diverse areas of the north-western part of the subcontinent and they also show some parallels with certain Copper Age cultures on other side of the Indian border in Pakistan. The pre-Harappan materials have been found in several sites in India of which the most important are Kalibangan in Ganganagar district in Rajasthan, Banawali and Mitathal, both in Haryana, Dholavira and Lothal in Gujarat which were also Harappan settlements. At Kunal in Hissar district of Haryana, a purely pre-Harappan site has been dug by J.N. Khatri and S. Acharya (State Department of Archaeology) yielding ornaments of gold and silver besides other material falling into three periods. The pre-Harappan elements also seem to have contributed to the growth of a mature Harappan culture in many localities.

Extensive explorations carried out by officers of the ASI and others from time to time further added on the Indian side over a thousand, pre-Harappan, Harappan and late Harappan sites distributed in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Harvana, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab besides at Manda near Jammu. The areas once occupied by Harappans alone in India covered a vast territory from Jammu and Punjab in the north to Alamgirpur in Meerut district in Uttar Pradesh in the south and regions of upper Rajasthan and Gujarat on the west. Some of the Harappan elements are also stated to have reached as far as Daimabad in Ahmadnagar district in Maharashtra.

Kalibangan with its twin mounds on the left bank of Ghaggar, was excavated by B.B. Lal, B.K. Thapar and J.P. Joshi of the ASI for several seasons. It revealed a twofold cultural sequence divisible into Period I and Period II representing pre-Harappan and Harappan cultures, respectively. The two small and large mounds turned out to be a citadel and a fortified Harappan city respectively. A remarkable discovery at the site was that of a ploughed field belonging to pre-Harappans who used varieties of painted decoration on their pottery and lived in mud houses.

The Harappan settlement at Kalibangan, as already stated, consisted of a citadel and a fortified town with gridded planning. Both were built of unbaked bricks. The citadel was divided into two equal halves by a partition-wall. While its northern division consisted of residential blocks, the southern one contained half a dozen platforms of mud bricks separated from each other by regular passages with elaborate drainage system made of baked bricks. Kalibangan has also yielded typical pottery and other usual artefacts associated with Harappans elsewhere.

Of a number of Harappan settlements located in Gujarat the outstanding city sites are Lothal in Surendranagar district and Dholavira and Surkotda, both in Kutch district excavated by the ASI. Excavation at Lothal was undertaken by S.R. Rao (ASI). Habitation began here with a community using micaceous red and black-and-red wares in the early phase of Period A. In the subsequent phases, the Harappans raised here their own township employing mud and baked bricks inside a rectangular walled enclosure within which the acropolis and the town itself were located with a dockyard at the back and a warehouse close to it. According to Rao, it served as a port town of the Harappans. The discovery of a Persian Gulf seal and other finds at this site have attested this fact. The material recovered from Period B at Lothal showed a somewhat decadent survival of the Harappans. Archaeologists have placed the life at Lothal from 2200 to 1700 BC. At Rangpur in Jhalawar district in Gujarat, where the remains show a certain affinity with those of Lothal, S.R. Rao noticed the devolution of Harappan urbanism into later ruralism.

Dholavira, an island in Kutch, is the largest and most notable of the Harappan cities so far unearthed in India. The excavator of this site, R.S. Bisht (ASI), found a deposit divisible into three cultural periods: pre-Harappan,

Harappan and late Harappan, distributed in seven stages. Pre-Harappan occupation of the site started as a fortified settlement which was developed by the Harappans into a citadel within a planned lower town enclosed by a fortification of square form. Between the citadel and the lower town, the Harappans also built a middle town. As a Harappan city, Dholavira has revealed elaborate arrangements for water supply, perhaps on account of its proximity to the sea. Notable discoveries here included remains of stadium-like structures besides a cemetery containing varieties of graves, mostly without skeletons, sometimes with a ring of stones around or as a cist or dolmen burial. The site has also yielded usual Harappan pottery and other materials. At stage V, the signs of the decline of the Harappan township emerged and after a brief desertion at stage VI, late Harappans occupied it retaining only some of the cultural traits of the Harappans. Following another desertion, the site was occupied by a group which lived in circular huts made of rubble.

At Surkotda in Kutch district, J.P. Joshi (ASI) exposed a Harappan settlement within an oblong fortification divided into two portions serving as a citadel and a city. Overlying the Harappan habitation, remains of two later cultural periods were found. In the Harappan period at Surkotda, houses and fortifications were built of mud and rubble masonry. The pottery of Harappan levels, besides the characteristic Indus valley ceramics in painted and plain varieties, comprised a cream-slipped chocolate brown, a reserve-slip and a polychrome ware. The main finds included a seal, chert blades, varieties of beads, rings, a bangle and spearheads of copper, toy cart-frames and wheels and querns, pestles and a damaged ivory comb. A significant discovery here was that of the bones of *Equus Caballus* Linn or horse.

Banawali in Haryana was also an important Harappan township represented by its massive mud-brick structural remains. R.S. Bisht (Department of Archaeology, Haryana) excavated it and obtained a threefold cultural sequence, namely pre-Harappan, Harappan and post-Harappan. It was first occupied as a fortified village by pre-Harappans whose ceramic assemblage is similar to that of Kalibangan Period I. There was little copper but bone tools were in abundance. Period I (pre-Harappan) was followed by a transitional phase represented by a mixed milieu of local and Harappan elements. Period II represented mature Harappan culture and the settlement was surrounded by a mud-brick fortification which contained inside an acropolis and a lower town. In Period III, after the desertion of the city by Harappans, a new settlement, devoid of urban traits, was founded here mainly outside the fortification. Their pottery showed some links with pre-Harappan elements. At Balu in Jind district in Haryana, U.V. Singh and Suraj Bhan, (Kurukshetra University) also found replacement of Harappans by late Harappans and decline of urbanism.

Ropar in Roopnagar district in Punjab and Alamgirpur in Meerut district in UP, excavated by Y.D. Sharma (ASI), also yielded evidence of Harappan culture with some local ceramic traits which did not continue further. At

both these sites, after a long gap, the presence of Iron Age, early-historical and medieval cultures was recorded.

Scores of late Harappan accumulations with their localized cultures have been explored in north India and Gujarat which confirmed the gradual decline of mature Harappan culture. Amongst these Hulas in Saharanpur district in UP, Rajakaran-ka-Qila in Kurukshetra district in Haryana, Zekhada in Banaskantha and Pabumath in Kutch districts both in Gujarat and containing late Harappan materials, were excavated respectively, by K.N. Dikshit (ASI), U.V. Singh (Kurukshetra University) K.T.M. Hegde (Vadodara University) and State Archaeological Department, Gujarat. These also indicated decadence of the Harappan culture which has been generally dated to early second millennium BC.

At Bhagwanpura in Kurukshetra district in Haryana, J.P. Joshi (ASI) unearthed a phase overlapping one between that of the late Harappans and the painted grey-ware-using people who were also associated with iron. The evidence may also suggest a longer survival of late Harappans at this site.

OTHER CHALCOLITHIC CULTURES

During the last five decades, Indian archaeologists explored and excavated numerous sites illustrating the expansion of Copper Age technology through diverse cultures and sources in various parts of India. These cultures had zonal origins in terms of distinct ceramic traditions which also served as the basis of their classification. Along with copper the use of microlithic tools made of quartz, agate, carnelion, chert, and so on was common to these cultures with a few exceptions. The chalcolithic cultures flourished mainly during the second millennium BC. At least some of them, however, appear to have originated in third millennium BC.

On the basis of field surveys, six principal chalcolithic complexes, each named after either a region, a type site or a distinct variety of pottery, have been identified in the country. These have been termed as (i) Banas or Ahar culture; (ii) Kayatha culture; (iii) Malwa culture; (iv) Savalda and Jorwe culture; (v) Gujarat Chalcolithic culture; and (vi) Ochre Coloured Pottery and other chalcolithic cultures of north and east India. After their emergence in a particular area, most of these cultures travelled outside their regions either through the migration of people or ideas and skills including those pertaining to ceramic techniques. Such an inference could be drawn on the basis of their pottery being available outside their original locale.

The main sites connected with protohistoric Banas culture of Rajasthan were excavated in Ahar in Udaipur district by H.D. Sankalia (Deccan College) and R.C. Agrawal (Department of Archaeology, Rajasthan) and unfolded a sequence of chalcolithic and early historic cultures. The characteristic ceramic of the chalcolithic period at Ahar was white-painted black-and-red ware comprising certain specific forms like dish-on-stand, incurved

or convex-sided bowl, high-necked globular jar and so on. Certain pots also had a cream-slip and some were handmade. The houses were raised on stone bases. Copper was the metal known to Aharians and they did not seem to have employed microlithic tools. Yet another site associated with Banas culture has been excavated in Gulund in the same district where a microlithic blades industry has been found associated with chalcolithic life-style. Carbon 14 dates suggested a time bracket from *circa* 2000 BC. to 1400 BC for the Banas culture. Shards of lustrous red and Jorwe wares, belonging to other chalcolithic cultures, were also found at Ahar. The influence of the tradition of white-painted black-and-red ware was noticed deep into the Gangetic valley and elsewhere in central India and Deccan. A third site of Banasian affinity is being currently dug in Balathal near Udaipur, by V.N. Mishra (Deccan College). It developed into a highly fortified settlement in the mid-chalcolithic period.

Kayatha Culture, named after the site Kayatha in Ujjain district in Madhya Pradesh, was discovered and excavated by V.S. Wakankar (Vikram University) and Z.D. Ansari (Deccan College). The digging unfolded a sequence of five cultural periods of which Period I represented the Kayatha culture marked by three distinct ceramic types comprising a fine sturdy ware dressed with brown slip, red painted buff and a combed ware. There were, besides, remains of mud houses, many copper objects including two axes, microliths and beads of semi-precious stone. Period II was associated with Banas Culture marked by bull figurines in terracotta, and Period III by the elements of Malwa culture. Periods IV and V represented historical cultures between 600 BC to AD 600. The C-14 date (calibrated) of the Kayatha culture is from 2300–2000 BC. Remains of Kayatha ware were also found at Dangwada in Ujjain district by Wakankar (Vikram University) and others.

The chalcolithic Malwa culture has been found in a number of excavated sites both within and outside Malwa in Madhya Pradesh. The distinct pottery associated with it included a buff-or-orange-slipped ware decorated with designs and motifs in black. The typical forms of the ware are globular high-necked pots with a flaring mouth, concave-sided bowls, channel-spouted cups and pedestalled goblets. The designs or painted motifs on the pots are mainly linear and geometric but depiction of plants, human and animal figures in somewhat conventionalized forms also occurs. Evidence of the knowledge of wheat, rice, black gram, green gram and lentil was also noted in some Malwa culture sites. Animal bones also suggested that the community associated with the culture was non-vegetarian and domesticated cattle and practised agriculture. The principal excavated sites associated with Malwa culture are Meheshwar and Navdatoli in Nimar district, Nagda in Ujjain district, Eran in Sagar district, Dangwada in Ujjain district in Madhya Pradesh and Daimabad in Ahmadnagar district and Inamgaon in Pune district in Maharashtra.

Generally, in all these settlements the chalcolithic phase is also associated with Banas black-and-red ware; at Nawadatoli, Jorwe ware of the upper Deccan was also noticed.

Outside the Malwa region, the most significant site associated with Malwa ware is Inamgaon in Maharashtra excavated by M.K. Dhavalikar (Deccan College). The settlement is initially associated with Malwa ware culture (1600 to 1400 BC) followed by early Jorwe (1400-1000 BC) and late Jorwe cultures (1400 to 700 BC).

The chalcolithic pottery of Savalda and Jorwe have been named after the type sites. Savalda ware, which is older than Jorwe, has a specific variety of pots bearing painted designs. It was found in the earliest levels of Daimabad exposed by S.A. Sali (ASI). The subsequent cultural phases here are marked by late Harappan, Malwa, early and late Jorwe wares. Noteworthy finds from Daimabad were four large copper sculptures of three animals and a cart showing Harappan workmanship.

Jorwe in Ahmadnagar district on Pravara, a tributary of Godavari, in Maharashtra, has yielded a typical chalcolithic ceramic industry which is stated to have originated around 1400 BC. Jorwe ware is characterized by a light to dark red wash bearing painting in black showing diverse motifs like stylized deer, fish-scale, human figures and geometric designs. The main Jorwe ceramic forms consist of concave-sided carinated bowls, spouted and globular jars. The people associated with this culture employed microliths and copper implements and disposed off their dead in urn burials. The best site representing the remains of the Jorwe culture are Nevasa in Ahmadnagar district and Inamgaon. Of the two phases of this culture, the later one continued till 700 BC, that is, right up to early historical period.

Gujarat had several local chalcolithic cultures the antiquity of some of which can be traced back to the third millennium BC. Some of them had interaction with certain Harappan settlements but otherwise these were essentially rural, copper-using cultures. Important Gujarati chalcolithic ceramics are pre-Prabhas and Prabhas chalcolithic and lustrous red wares found at Prabhas Patan in Somnath district by J.M. Nanavati (Gujarat State Archaeology) besides the non-Harappan Padri Ware recorded by V. Shinde (Deccan College) at Padri in Bavnagar district and micaceous red ware found at Lothal and Rangpur. A black-and-red ware is also found in Gujarat. It has been reported from the Harappan sites.

In western Uttar Pradesh and eastern Rajasthan a ceramic named as Ochre Coloured Pottery (OCP) has been associated with Copper Age besides the late Harappan wares. OCP has been encountered at the lowest levels at Hastinapur in Meerut district, Atranjikhhera and Jakhera in Etah district, Ahichehhatra in Bareilly district, Lal Qila in Bulandshahr district, Sapai in Mainpuri district in UP and Noh in Bharatpur district in Rajasthan. At Lal Qila, R.C. Gaur (Aligarh Muslim University) and at Sapai B.B. Lal (ASI) found copper bits and copper hoard type implements with OCP, respectively.

According to R.C. Gaur, at Atranjikhhera Period II site OCP levels were associated with a chalcolithic culture represented by a plain black-and-red ware, copper objects and microlithic flakes and cores. But in closeby Jakhera and at Noh, plain black-and-red was associated with early iron.

According to G.R. Sharma (Allahabad University), the chalcolithic culture of the mid-Ganga valley, which was a further development of local neolithic cultures, used both plain and painted black-and-red wares. Sharma also holds that at Magha in Mirzapur district, Vindhyan megalithic burials, plain black-and-red ware were associated with copper fragments. Rakesh Tiwari's (State Archaeology, Uttar Pradesh) excavation at Raja Nal-ka-Tila in Sonbhadra district, which yielded plain and painted shards of black-and-red ware besides black-slipped ware with lithic and bone artefacts in chalcolithic levels, confirmed G.R. Sharma's view. At Koldihawa in Allahabad district and Sohgauna and Narhan in Gorakhpur district, excavated by Sharma (Allahabad University) S.N. Chaturvedi (Gorakhpur University) and P. Singh (BHU), chalcolithic deposits contained painted black-and-red ware.

In Bihar, the yields, especially at Senuwar in Rohtas district, are similar to those in Raja Nal-ka-Tila. At Chirand, white-painted black ware was associated with microliths. At Manjhi in Saran district, Chechar in Vaishali district and Maner in Patna district, only plain variety of black-and-red pottery, in some cases with black-slipped ware, was found in chalcolithic levels. At many sites, plain black-and-red ware survived even with iron. In West Bengal, in Burdwan district, excavated by S. Mukherjee and Amita Ray (Calcutta University), yielded from the chalcolithic levels, iron artefacts and slag along with black-and-red and black-slipped wares. However, at Pandu-Rajar Dhibi in the same district, and Mahishdal in Midnapore district, P.C. Dasgupta (State Archaeology, West Bengal) reported a separate chalcolithic horizon. An interesting feature of Pandu-Rajar Dhibi is the presence of some burials. D.P. Agrawal places eastern chalcolithic between 1600 BC and 800 BC.

EMERGENCE OF IRON AGE AND HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

On the basis of the assessment of the archaeological data collected since 1947, it has been generally inferred that the Iron Age commenced in India around 1000 BC or somewhat earlier. Emerging, thanks to stimuli from more than one source, it spread from region to region gradually in stages. In south India the Iron Age emerged independently and was largely associated with megalithic burials. Perhaps the megalithic builders enjoyed a developed agro-pastoral economy in most cases. In Karnataka and parts of Andhra, the Iron Age was preceded culturally by a chalcolithic horizon. At Komaranahalli in Chitradurga district in Karnataka, an overlap between chalcolithic levels and the phase showing early occurrence of iron, has been placed around 1000 BC. The Iron Age in south India is mainly associated

with varieties of iron implements and typical pot-forms in black-and-red ware which also survived with megalithic tradition till historical times. At Paiyampalli in Tamil Nadu, megalithic cultural elements with the presence of iron overlapped with developed neolithic material.

In the Ganga valley, eastern Punjab, Haryana and eastern Rajasthan and eastern India, the presence of iron has been reported along with three major protohistoric ceramic industries, namely, the painted grey, black-and-red and black-slipped wares in the levels datable to early part of first millennium BC or even slightly earlier. Important sites yielding iron from protohistoric levels were primarily Alamgir in Meerut district, Atranjikhera and Bateshwar in Agra district, Jakhera in Etah district, Hulas in Saharanpur district in Uttar Pradesh and Jodhpura and Noh in Jaipur and Bharatpur districts of Rajasthan respectively. In eastern Uttar Pradesh iron was observed at Narhan in Gorakhpur district in the levels yielding mainly black-slipped ware (800 BC to 600 BC) whereas at Rajghat in Varanasi district it was found with black-and-red ware dated 800 BC. The developed Iron Age, however, is found to be associated with Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW) according to excavated data.

In Bihar, iron is available at Taradih in Gaya district with a later phase of black-and-red ware. In Senuwar, Maner and Chirand, however, iron objects made their appearance with early NBPW as in many other sites in Uttar Pradesh. In West Bengal early occurrence of iron is associated with black-and-red ware. Golbai Sasan in Orissa, however, illustrated occurrence of iron in a mixed chalcolithic/neolithic context.

During the period under reference, studies on diverse varieties of megalithic burials have progressed well in different areas of India and numerous types of funerary structures have been brought to light. Megalithic tombs and an associated site have been unearthed in Vidharbha region in Maharashtra by S.B. Deo (Deccan College) at Khapa, Mahurjhari and Takalghat in Nagpur district. The yields included fine and rich varieties of iron tools and objects dating around 500 BC. The excavation at Adam in Nagpur district by Amarendra Nath (ASI) has given a date bracket of 1000 BC to 500 BC as the date for the emergence of iron in Vidharbha also confirmed the date in regard to iron. In Madhya Pradesh the earliest levels of sites in Ujjain excavated by N.R. Banerjee (ASI) and dated around 750 BC, have yielded iron in association with black-and-red ware. At Nagda in Ujjain district, Banerjee found iron objects with black-and-red ware and microliths suggesting the survival of the chalcolithic tradition.

TRACING THE SEQUENTIAL GROWTH OF CULTURE

A major contribution of archaeologists of free India has been the unearthing of material evidence indicating the sequential growth of culture in various parts of India from the early historical period to later times. Prior to 1947,

knowledge about the nature of habitations or towns or regional capitals of great states (Mahajanapadas) during the time of Buddha and later, was very limited. The hazy picture provided by the literary sources could be corrected on the basis of archaeological data available after Independence. Excavations of numerous historical sites yielded varied antiquities and remains. Of these the significant ones are Sunet and Sanghol in Ludhiana district and Ropar in Roopnagar district of Punjab; Agroha in Hissar district and Harsha-ka-Tila in Kurukshetra district in Haryana; Purana Qila in Delhi; Hastinapur and Alamgirpur in Meerut district, Atranjikhhera in Etah district, Mathura and Sonkh in Mathura district, Kausambi in Allahabad district, Rajghat (ancient Varanasi), Sravasti in Bahraich district and Piparhawa in Siddharthnagar in Uttar Pradesh.

In Bihar, the significant sites are Taradih in Gaya district, Patna, Vaisali in Muzaffarpur district and Champa in Bhagalpur district. The important sites in West Bengal are Rajbadidanga in Murshidabad district, Pandu-Rajar Dhibi and Mangalkot in Burdwan district and Chandraketugarh in the 24 Parganas district. Ujjain and Dangwada in Ujjain district, Besnagar in Vidisha district, Eran in Sagar district and Tripuri in Jabalpur district are sites which deserve mention in Madhya Pradesh. The list from Rajasthan comprises Noh in Bharatpur district, Sunari in Jhunjunu district, Bairat in Jaipur district, and Ahar in Udaipur district. Prabhas-Patan in Somnath district and Nagara in Kaira district in Gujarat are important sites. Adam in Nagpur district, Ter in Osmanabad district, Bhokardan and Paithan in Aurangabad district and Nevasa in Ahmadnagar district are important sites in Maharashtra. The ones in Andhra Pradesh are Dharanikota or ancient Dhanyakataka in Guntur district, Nagarjunakonda in Guntur district or ancient Vijayapuri, the capital of Ikshvaku rulers, Dhulikata in Karimnagar district and Nelakondapally in Khamman district. Vanavasi in North Kanara district, Vadagaon Madhavapur in Belgaum district and Chandravalli in Chitradurga district are the main sites in Karnataka. Kanchipuram in Chingleput district, Kaveripattinam in Thanjavur district and Korkai in Tirunelveli district are the principal sites in Tamil Nadu.

Field-work and studies undertaken on early historical India during the last five decades have shown that iron technology contributed to the improvement of the economy by replacing the barter system by monetary exchange. This is clear from the emergence and spread of coinage and the presence of fortified towns of different dates in first millennium BC at Kausambi, Vaisali, Mathura, Sravasti and elsewhere indicating the growth of Iron Age urbanism which also gradually reached other parts of the country in the form of a movement by the fourth-third century BC and later.

Vigorous post-Independence archaeological activity has also indicated that a notable pottery, closely connected with the early historical period, was the NBPW in its diverse shades. This particular ware seems to have originated somewhere in mid-eastern India sometime in the first half of the

first millennium BC and gradually spread to the north-west and west, east, the Deccan and south India by the second century BC.

Excavations of the historical settlements have also unveiled phases of cultural growth through the ages, nature of ceramics, medium of construction, structural remains including fortifications, presence of local as well as pan-Indian or imported cultural elements including coinage, pottery, sculptures, ornaments, implements, inscribed materials, varieties of artefacts and so on in regard to each period and each site.

Another remarkable aspect of post-1947 archaeology is reflected in the discovery of a number of outstanding Buddhist remains of various dates including stupas, reliquaries and other antiquities, monasteries, inscriptions architectural fragments and sculptures at Vaisali in Bihar, Mathura and Piprahwa in Uttar Pradesh, Sanghol in Punjab, Nagarjunakonda and Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh, Satadhara in Madhya Pradesh, Pauni in Maharashtra, Ratnagiri and Latitigiri in Orissa, and Antichak in Bhagalpur representing the site of the famous Buddhist University of Vikramasila in Bihar and elsewhere. On the basis of the recovery of several sealings Piprahwa has been identified with the ancient site of Buddha's native city Kapilavastu, by K.M. Srivastava (ASI).

At Purola in Uttarkasi district and Jagatgram in Dehradun district in Uttar Pradesh, evidence of the celebration of Vedic sacrificial rituals was unearthed in the form of *syenachitis* (hawk-shaped altars). The former settlement has been dated to *circa* first century AD and latter to third century AD. The altar at Jagatgram was built of inscribed bricks mentioning that it marked the celebration of the fourth horse sacrifice (Asvamedha) by a king named Silavarman.

MEDIEVAL REMAINS

Under specific projects, several medieval settlements and structural details of royal building complexes were unearthed. Of these, the important ones included Sekta, a burial site in Imphal district in Manipur, Kalkatpatna in Puri district, a port site containing Chinese and Arabian pottery in Orissa, Fatehpur Sikri the deserted capital of Akbar in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, Hampi the royal township of Vijayanagara rulers in Bellary district in Karnataka, Champaner in Panchamahals district, seat of Gujarat sultans near Vadodara. The list also includes the Qutbshahi remains at Golkonda (near Hyderabad), grand structures inside Barabati fort in Orissa and architectural features of the sixteenth century Augustine church in Velha, Goa.

SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS

Scores of new inscriptions, including ten records of the Mauryan ruler Asoka, and over three thousand important medieval and pre-medieval epigraphs

have been discovered and deciphered after 1947 in India. B.N. Mukherjee of Calcutta deciphered a new historical script showing a mixture of Kharosthi and Brahmi. Systematic and detailed studies on temple architecture in the context of the ancient Vastu tradition have been carried out by Krishna Deva, K.R. Srinivasan, K.V. Soundara Rajan, I.K. Sarma and others of ASI and M.A. Dhaky of the American Institute of Indian Studies Varanasi.

Tremendous progress has been achieved in the area of scientific investigations into archaeological material, palaeo-climatic studies and pollution damage to heritage sites. This has been made possible by the co-operation of scientists like B.B. Lal (ASI), K.T.M. Hegde (Baroda University), Vishnu Mitre and K.S. Sarasvat (Birbal Sahni Institute), D.P. Agrawal (Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad), S.C. Tiwari (Delhi University), and A.K. Sharma (ASI). Equally important have been the contributions by R.V. Joshi, S.N. Rajguru, G.L. Badam, M.D. Kajule, S.S. Kulkarni (Deccan College), K.S. Sarasvat (Benaras University), O.P. Agrawal (National Research Laboratory), B.N. Tandan (ASI) and N. Subbaraman (ASI), Javeed Ashraf (Jawaharlal Nehru University), and several others. Their contribution to archaeology has included analyses of metals, ceramics, glass, stone, ivory, bone and other materials, identification of ancient flora and fauna, food habits and the nature of cultivation and assessment, human and animal skeletal remains, geological formations in the context of archaeology including palaeo-climatic situations and other aspects of environmental archaeology. While working on a zinc-mining site of Zawar in Udaipur, Rajasthan, K.T.M. Hegde, who was also an archaeologist brought to light the technique of zinc distillation as known in ancient India.

CONSERVATION OF MONUMENTS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

One of the main tasks of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and State Departments of Archaeology is to conserve and preserve protected monuments. The ASI successfully undertook the preservation work through CPWD during the British period but just before Independence conservation was fully departmentalized by the ASI. Consequently after 15 August 1947, archaeological officers got directly involved with conservation of ancient buildings with greater responsibility than before. A significant result of this change has been the organization of periodical training camps for young archaeologists and engineering staff by the ASI. These have also proved to be useful for the state departments of archaeology.

Apart from carrying out routine repairs to protected buildings and remains, the ASI, during the past fifty years conducted as special projects, problematic and comprehensive conservation works of outstanding nature in respect of Gol-Gumbad in Bijapur (Karnataka), rock-cut caves at Ajanta, Ellora, Pitalkhora and Elephanta (Maharashtra), palaces and shrines at Chittorgarh (Rajasthan), stupas at Patihaspur and shrines at Naranag and temples

at Kiramchi (Jammu and Kashmir). The list also includes Taj Mahal and Fatehpur Sikri in Agra in Uttar Pradesh, churches in Goa, monuments at Champaner and the Dvarkadhisha temple (Gujarat), temples at Sibsagar (Assam), the Sun temple at Konarak and Jagannath shrine at Puri (Orissa), and Charminar, Hyderabad. It also undertook the unique task of transplanting excavated remains, especially of the Ikshvaku period of Nagarjunakonda and the temples at Srísailam, to considerable distances from the original sites.

Some of the state departments of archaeology also carried out conservation of a few important monuments in their care during the period under reference.

LABOUR OVERSEAS

Archaeologists from ASI who have earned a reputation for their work, have, in the post-Independence period, also contributed to the archaeology and preservation of structural remains of other countries, particularly, Afghanistan, Egypt, Nepal, Bahrain, Bhutan and Cambodia.

During 1966, a brief mission from ASI under T.N. Ramachandran inspected and assessed important ancient sites, monuments and antiquities of various periods in Afghanistan keeping in view their affinity with Indian culture and future collaboration. Subsequently, in 1969, a team of Indian conservationists led by R. Sengupta and B.B. Lal (ASI) conducted extensive conservation and preservation work, both structural and chemical, at Bamiyan in Afghanistan. The Indian experts mainly conserved two huge rock-cut Buddha figures, 38 m and 55 m in height respectively and also wall-paintings at the site. The team also conducted repairs to the Tomb of Kwaja Parsa, a late Timurid monument, at Balkh.

In 1961-2, ASI deputed a team of archaeologists headed by B.B. Lal (ASI) to Egypt to work at a site near the village of Afyeh on the Nile in Nubia. The team excavated a settlement belonging to A-group people (as known in Egyptian archaeology) and an ancient cemetery of C-group people and also surveyed the terraces of the Nile.

In the early 1960s, mural paintings of the seventeenth century decorating the famous palace at Bhaktapur (Nepal) were chemically treated and preserved. In addition, Debala Mitra and R.V. Joshi (ASI), respectively carried out field-work on historical remains of Nepalese Tarai and on Pleistocene geology in the Kathmandu valley.

During 1985, a group of archaeologists from ASI under K.M. Srivastava was invited to Bahrain to undertake excavation at an ancient site. The team exposed protohistoric remains of which a few antiquities also illustrated some kind of links with India.

Several teams of experts consisting of senior archaeologists, engineers, chemists, architects, photographers, surveyors, draftsmen and other technicians were successively deputed to Cambodia from 1982-3 onwards to

assess and conduct repairs to Angkor Wat, the celebrated temple of Vishnu. Created by the Khmer king Suryavarman II (AD 1113–1150), it is an extensive structural complex in terraced form with a moat around.

After the French experts who contributed to its preservation earlier left Cambodia in early 1970s, the monument suffered on account of neglect and local climatic conditions including heavy rains and thick growth of vegetation. A large and long gallery depicting scenes from Hindu epics, particularly the story of the churning of the ocean (Amrita-Manthan) which was dismantled by French experts for conservation, could not be restored by them; and the structural members were lying in a detached state, outside in the compound. Most roofs of the temple were found leaking and the stones were found in a cracked, dislodged or damaged condition with broken and missing pillars. Besides, the Indian specialists found the great temple of Angkor Wat full of moss, lichen and thick vegetation and internally full of bats and in immediate need of repair.

The conservation work began in 1986 and was completed in 1993. The roofs and tops were rebuilt by locating and refixing their original slabs from the heaps of stones, and then waterhightened. The entire dismantled gallery was completely restored in its original form and damaged stones/slabs and parts of the structure were mended. In some cases, missing pillars, once supporting the superstructure, were replaced by Reinforced Concrete Cement (RCC) posts which can be removed whenever stone ones are available. The vegetation was cleared and weak and crumbling members of the complex were reset and consolidated. After the removal of moss, lichen and other accretions, various parts of the complex, including sculptures, were chemically treated and preserved.

Experts of ASI went to Bhutan to implement a pilot project for the chemical preservation and documentation of murals in the important monuments of that country. During successive years the Indian specialists conserved paintings in Urci and Hamtongsa (Wangdiphodrong) Dzong, Nekhang-Lhakhang and Mithrugpe Lhakhang monasteries. The paintings were cleared of dust, dirt, soot and so on and then chemically preserved.

It is clear from all that has been written above that Indian archaeology has made tremendous progress since Independence. Nevertheless, some developments warrant concern. There has been a fall in interest in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Persian studies, and particularly, Indian epigraphy. As a discipline epigraphy is declining in India; very few epigraphists are left in the country now. Knowledge of ancient and medieval languages is essential for the interpretation of the archaeological data with precision. Translation is not a dependable basis for inferences. Besides, all the ancient texts do not have authentic or critical translated versions. It is therefore essential to train young Sanskrit/Prakrit and Arabic-Persian scholars in archaeology, especially epigraphy and numismatics, and provide junior archaeologists opportunities to learn archaic scripts and ancient languages in the Institute of Archaeology or elsewhere, and provide

them suitable jobs with attractive remuneration. Introduction of computer technology in the ASI and other similar agencies is now a prerequisite for easy documentation of data and speedy analysis of material.

The other problem is that the focus of archaeological studies in the country is largely on India and scholars know very little about the archaeology of the neighbouring countries like Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Tibet, China, Central Asian and South-East Asian nations with whom India once shared some common cultural heritage. Moreover, India has very few experts with a sound knowledge of West-Asian, Egyptian and Graeco-Roman archaeology. The problem can be solved by sending deserving young scholars from the universities or ASI or similar institutions to foreign universities for four to five years to specialize in Egyptology, West-Asian, Iranian, Chinese, Central Asian or South-East Asian archaeology and ancient and modern European or Asian languages and providing them with suitable jobs on return.

The proper growth of Indian archaeology as an academic discipline requires greater co-operation among scientists interested in archaeology, specialists in related disciplines, and archaeologists who have generally been working in isolation. Revision of existing archaeological laws in the light of new concepts and requirements is also needed so that they have greater applicability in the areas of preservation of monuments and protection of antiquities.

During the last four or five decades constructional expertise on the medieval arcuate monuments, especially those of the Indo-Islamic period, has become increasingly scarce. The earlier generation of specialists is already dead and modern civil engineers, architects or archaeologists are not particularly inclined to specialize in this technically complicated area. Consequently, conservationists face problems whenever a damaged dome has to be restored or a crumbling arch has to be reconstructed for the safety of a monument. The problem can be solved by devising a special training programme for archaeological conservators with the collaboration of ASI and institutions specializing in civil engineering.

Should the measures mentioned above be forthcoming, Indian archaeology will not only develop on sounder lines with a widened base for studies and research, but also subscribe in a better manner to the conservation and preservation of the archaeological heritage of the nation in the next century.

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ACHYUT KANVINDE

Architecture: Absorption and Evolution

The history of Indian architecture reflects the civilizational endeavour and aspirations of the country's people at different periods in the past. Architecture in India has been through a continuous process of evolution and change based on the knowledge of building craft on the one hand and cultural faith based on religious myths on the other. Historical architecture in India can be broadly classified under four major periods, namely, Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim and European. But these periods did not constitute rigidly separated compartments; development and change being always a gradual process, periods overlapped and were influenced by one another. This essay seeks to focus on Indian architecture and its development after Independence. It is, however, also meant to recognize the continuity and evolution of architectural expression in spite of diverse forces influencing it, and the manner in which it has maintained its indigenous qualities with continuity amalgamating, in the process, regional as well as national peculiarities. Contemporary architecture is the product of forces now prevalent and having a bearing on shaping it. Traditionally, rulers wielding political power used architecture and patronization of cultural pursuits to glorify their reigns. The building technology of the time, climatic conditions and regional peculiarities lent to their architecture its characteristic qualities.

The Muslim invasion disrupted the continuity of the early evolution of architecture in India. Muslim architecture, however, became gradually a part of overall Indian architecture. Later, 200 years of British rule similarly disrupted the earlier continuity. Initially, however, it helped Indian architecture to absorb the fruits of the scientific and industrial revolution in Europe as well as new technologies of materials and construction. It may be worthwhile to observe the situation in India before the British began ruling the country, the situation during their rule and their contribution that continue to help and influence architecture even after Independence. It is also essential to recognize and record India's achievement after Independence, past imagery and styles as well as the influence of international developments which shaped architecture in course of time.

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when India did not participate in the scientific and industrial revolution, the architecture that the British introduced in the country was essentially to build their strongholds in major port towns like Calcutta, Madras and Bombay and also to project an image of stability. These strongholds consisted mainly of government

offices, university senate halls, high courts, railway termini, town halls and commercial offices as a collective complex along with the respective forts. These expressed not only British power but an overall sense of order. Meanwhile, shortly after World War I, countries like Austria, the Netherlands, France and Germany began using new technology and materials in revolutionizing architecture and making it an expression of social change. Architects like Coffman and Wagner from Austria known for their pioneering work, and subsequently leaders like Walter Gropius, Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe and J. Oud, carried forward the movement successfully with determination. Britain, however, had no major role to play in the movement in those days. Hence it did not have any impact on India, then a British colony.

Pre-Independence British architects in India mainly followed the colonial approach and were not in the stream of revolutionary movement. Shortly before World War I and about the time when it was decided to shift the capital from Calcutta to Delhi, the initial preparatory work of designing India Gate and the Prince of Wales Museum in Bombay, was assigned to Wittet, the English architect. Wittet designed buildings in Bijapur style which imparted an element of so-called Indianness to government architecture and initially influenced other British and Indian architects of the time. Claude Batley who came to India sometime in 1920s was very much influenced by Wittet's approach and encouraged its expression in architectural design at the J.J. School of Architecture, Bombay, where he was the head. He even built major complexes in Bombay and Ahmedabad by using such a design. Batley, however, had no clear philosophy behind his approach other than embellishing old times in the form of a stylistic envelope and hence did not catch the imagination of the younger generation despite his sincerity and persistent effort.

DESIGNING NEW DELHI

The designing of the capital, New Delhi, by Edwin Lutyens and Baker was generally well conceived in terms of the conditions and understanding of the period. The influence of the garden-city movement which was then in vogue in Europe is reflected in the planning of generous garden spaces in relation to the core of the town in the natural setting of the Yamuna river and the Ridge. The plan also used heritages as landmarks at nodal points on axial lines of avenues as reference points. The locations of the Safdarjung Tomb, Jantar Mantar, the Old Observatory on Parliament Street, Jama Masjid and several similar structures have been well conceived. The architecture of the Secretariat, Parliament House and the *Rashtrapati Bhavan* is Italian classical renaissance in spirit and only covered by Indian motifs. The road system likewise, was influenced by that of Washington, D.C. and Versaille. It does not seem to have been conceived for use by automobiles and now presents serious problems for city circulation.

The capital of New Delhi was fully constructed sometime between 1930 and 1935. Indian architects, who had later to cope with the overall direction of expansion to meet Delhi's growth, somehow missed the essential vision associated with Lutyens' design. Two main things were needed to give the city its needed structure — a meaningful system of open spaces in relation to historical heritage and a ring railway. The latter, though initiated as early as 1954, was unfortunately not taken advantage of while positioning the District Centres. That was a great error from the point of view of city circulation.

RETURN OF THE NATIVES

Although several Indian architects had visited the United Kingdom during pre-War and pre-Independence periods, only some of them seemed dedicated and their work demonstrated the general line of approach to modern architecture prevalent at the time in that country. Three Indian architects returned from America in 1947, the year the country became independent. They were Gauri Bajpae, Habib Rehman and the present writer. Habib Rehman and Gauri Bajpae had their education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), while the writer studied at Harvard where Gropius was the chairman of the department. Mansingh Rana was associated with F.L. Wright and returned to India around 1950 and joined the Central Public Works Department (CPWD). His outstanding works are Nehru Library at Teenmurti, also offices of the Election Commission in Delhi. J.K. Chaudhuri returned to India in 1950 after receiving his city and regional planning degrees in UK. His outstanding projects are IIT, Delhi, the Bhakra Nangal Township and the Engineering College at Chandigarh. Charles Correa and Balkrishna Doshi returned to India sometime around 1955-6. While Charles Correa received his education from MIT, Doshi had his training with Le Corbusier. Another group consisting of Raj Rewal, Kuldeep Singh, Morad Chowdhury and Ranjit Sabikhi, returned during the early 1960s and started practising. Habib Rehman joined the West Bengal Government's Public Works Department (PWD) initially and the CPWD subsequently, whereas the present writer, joined the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) during the initial period and started his own practice later. All those who had studied abroad had their own ideas and approach to architecture.

Bajpae died young. His important contributions include the Jahangir Art Gallery at Bombay and the Oberoi Hotel in Delhi designed in association with Piloo Mody. Works of the architects mentioned above, which have received favourable mention in most Indian as well as foreign journals, can be regarded in some way as pioneering in the post-Independence period. Their work was influenced by the different institutions in which they had studied. Thanks to their personal commitment, however, they grew with time and developed their distinct individual approaches. Habib Rehman's

outstanding works include the Lalit Kala Academy building in Delhi, Government Complexes like the tomb of Maulana Azad and the Gandhi Memorial at Barrackpore near Calcutta. The present writer's early works include the laboratory building of the Textile Institute at Ahmedabad, the building of the Central Electronic and Engineering Research Institute at Pilani, Balkrishna Harivallabhdas' House at Ahmedabad, the Dairy at Meh-sana and also the IIT complex at Kanpur. His later projects comprise the Science Museums in Bombay and New Delhi and the National Insurance Academy building at Pune.

The works of Charles Correa and Balkrishna Doshi have also received favourable attention in India and abroad. Correa's early works include the Gandhi Ashram at Ahmedabad and later works, multi-storeyed apartments in Bombay, the Life Insurance Corporation building in Delhi and Jawahar Kala Kendra at Jaipur. Doshi's early works were the Indology Museum and School of Architecture at Ahmedabad. His later works consist of the building of the Vastu Shilp Foundation, Gandhi Labour Institute, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore and the Diamond Bourse at Bombay.

THE EXPATRIATE CONTRIBUTION

Special mention needs to be made of the contribution and works of foreign architects who have made India their home. Laurie Baker, a British architect, who has been practising for more than forty years has to his credit some of the most outstanding projects marked by the creative use of indigenous construction material. Joseph Allen Stein, an American architect, who has been practising in Delhi for more than forty years, has contributed high quality design and craftsmanship to the Indian architectural scene. His early building is the India International Centre Delhi, and the latest amongst several others is the Habitat Centre in Delhi covering more than ten acres of land with a bold, purposeful and innovative design concept.

Amongst the group of architects who made their appearance in the early 1960s is Raj Rewal who has to his credit a large number of outstanding projects such as the buildings of the State Trading Corporation, the National Council of Educational Research and Training, Institute of Immunology as also a major complex like the Hall of Nations in the Trade Fair Authority — all in Delhi. Kuldeep Singh's best project is the Civic Centre in New Delhi and several equally interesting ones in Cochin. The Design Group, a partnership between Ajay Chaudhuri and Ranjit Sabikhi, has designed the Training Institute at Faridabad in Haryana, and the District Centre at Janakpuri and the Yamuna Apartments, Delhi. Morad Chowdhury, who used to be their partner earlier, and presently a partner of Kanvinde, Rai & Chowdhury, has to his credit several important projects like the Sher-i-Kashmir Medical Institute and Sports Complex, both at Srinagar, and the innovative Industrial Complex of Delhi Cloth and General Mills at Dasna.

Anant Raje, who initially worked for Luis Kahn for the Management Institute at Ahmedabad and in the United States of America, returned to India in the early 1970s. The important projects he executed after his return include the building of the Indian Statistical Institute in Delhi and that of the Forest Management Research Institute at Bhopal. His work is outstanding and respected by other professionals. Uttam Jain, a Bombay-based architect, has designed the Jodhpur University Complex in Rajasthan using regional designs. His outstanding work is the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research in Bombay. Sumit Ghosh, who studied at Pennsylvania University in the USA and returned in 1966, has done some outstanding work, the most important being the designing of the Sitaram Bharati Institute in Delhi. Partha Ghosh has contributed to a large number of important projects of which the commercial complex at Ahmedabad deserves special mention. Their contemporaries, Ashok Dhawan and K. Sharma, are known for their designing of Tehri Dam Township.

There are several other architects who followed the above group and have set up equally high standards of performance and creativity and their work is well known through professional journals in this country. Kothari Associates, a senior firm of architects, began practising even before Independence and has to its credit a large number of commercial, educational and residential complexes, medical institutes and so on. Known for their quality work, their noteworthy recent projects are the Escorts Heart Institute & Research Centre, Delhi and a multi-storeyed commercial complex. Shivnath Prasad practised in India for fifteen years before migrating to the USA. His important projects are the Shriram Cultural Centre and Akbar Hotel in Delhi. C.P. Kukreja Associates, who have been in practice for more than twenty-five years, have designed buildings in Delhi and elsewhere. Their important projects are Jawaharlal Nehru University complex and Amba Deep building in Delhi. Sharad Das has been in practice for more than twenty years. His outstanding projects are the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, built for the Asian Games, which is a daring and outstanding structure and also the Indira Gandhi Open University complex which is still under construction, both in Delhi. Sachdeva & Eggleston have been in practice for more than thirty years. Their important projects are the Indian pavilion in Osaka Fair, Modern School and multi-storeyed commercial complexes in Delhi, and Guru Nanak University complex in Amritsar. Rajinder Kumar, practising in Delhi, is known for his creative designing of the largest number of five-star hotels in the country, important among them being the Maurya Sheraton in Delhi and Leela Penta in Bombay. His earlier work is the Interstate Bus Terminal in Delhi. Jasbir Sawhney, educated at the MIT has designed several major constructions including the Ashok Yatri Niwas and the Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) Place, both in Delhi.

Satish Grover who heads the Department of Architecture at the School of Planning & Architecture in Delhi, has designed such outstanding structures

as the Indoor Swimming Pool for the Asiad in 1982, Himachal Bhawan in Delhi and the Oberoi Hotel in Bhubaneswar.

Among Landscape Architects, Ravinder Bhan is known for the high quality of his work. Some of his outstanding projects are Shakti Sthal, Delhi, built to commemorate Indira Gandhi, the landscape around the Golden Temple, Amritsar, and the ISKCON Temple, Delhi. K.D. Pradhan, a Bombay-based Landscape architect has done some significant work, as has Prof. Mohammad Shaheer who heads the Landscape Architecture Department in the School of Planning & Architecture, Delhi, and has designed **Rajiv Gandhi's Samadhi**.

It may not be out of place to mention the roles of Mahendra Raj and Shirish Patel, structural engineers, who have executed projects designed by several architects. Mahendra Raj was associated with this writer in the construction of the IIT complex at Kanpur, and the Science Museums at Bombay and Delhi, with Morad Chowdhury in building the DCM Textile Mills at Dasna and with B.V. Doshi in constructing the Management Institute in Bangalore and the Diamond Bourse in Bombay. He built the Life Insurance Corporation and the British Council buildings in Delhi, both designed by Charles Correa, and the State Trading Corporation building and Hall of Nations at Pragati Maidan, Delhi, both designed by Raj Rewal. Shirish Patel has made an equally important contribution. His notable works include a multi-storeyed apartments in Bombay designed by Charles Correa. The works of both Rewal and Patel reflect originality and sensitivity in addition to engineering efficiency.

PROJECT CHANDIGARH

An architectural work which is talked about all over the world is the capital complex of Punjab and Haryana at Chandigarh designed by the French architect Le Corbusier. The principal members of Corbusier's team were his cousin P. Jeanneret and two British architects, Maxwell Fry and Jean Drew. The team also included a number of Indian architects, engineers and planners. Important amongst them were Prabhavalkar, architect and town planner, and Jeet Malhotra and Aditya Prakash, architect, all with a British training background. As the chief engineer of the project, P.L. Verma was given the charge of building the capital town which was initially planned for a population of five hundred thousand with a government complex, city centre, university campus, cultural centre and industrial establishments.

The planning was based on a grid system of roads with a hierarchy of transport depending on the weightage of traffic. The city was divided into a number of sectors and each sector into neighbourhood clusters. Housing subdivisions were based on government categories and income group types. It was for the first time that a project of such magnitude was conceived and implemented in India in an integrated manner. The attention of professionals

all over the world was riveted on it, particularly since Le Corbusier was regarded as a revolutionary and creative architect and a leader of professional architects the world over. The main government complex, designed under his personal supervision, was marked by certain compelling and exciting visual features. The entire complex consisting of the Legislative Assembly and the High Court buildings and the Governor's residences, included landscaped spaces and hand sculptures. The city centre, likewise, was based **on the module system to make for variety.**

The module system was based on an ideology which Le Corbusier had expounded before the Congress Internationale für Architecture Moderne (CIAM) at Venice, in 1955, citing the examples of St Mark's Place at Venice and other equally significant city designs like that of Siena. Like the St Mark's Place at Venice, the Capital complex at Chandigarh with its outstanding setting, was intended to have a certain vitality which would attract people, and the latter and the architecture would complement one another. In spite of all considerations that went into the planning of Chandigarh this did not happen, though the city provided the physical fulfilment of human needs.

INCOMPLETE PICTURE

The government complex as well as the city centre somehow present an incomplete picture. The former is deserted after offices give over at five pm. Individual buildings present a feeling of disjointed quality; an ambience of togetherness is missing. A group of more than fifty architect planners from abroad called on Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at her residence in 1975 with a request for completing the Punjab Governor's residence and the hand sculptures, a cherished dream of Corbusier. Whereas the hand sculptures were completed, the Governor's residence somehow remains incomplete. Landscaping of the city taken as a whole remains incomplete and reflects neglect. Nevertheless Chandigarh remains an outstanding venture, associated with the names of Jawaharlal Nehru and Le Corbusier. India is proud of it and needs more projects with support at the highest level.

The development of architecture in India during the first decade after Independence was dominated by the so-called international style mainly because of the advantages of new technology and easy adaptability. However, there has been a continuous search for a new rationale for design application which brought about a gradual change in architectural expression. About this time, there emerged a strong lobby demanding Indianness in architecture. It was observed that it is not merely a question of adopting a stylistic envelope in the name of Indianness but of recognizing and integrating values in architecture while interpreting the same through the imagery of past associations. Contemporary young architects are not content with buildings which are merely functional and are searching for deeper meanings and values

indicating the continuity of tradition and sensitivity to regional and climatic needs as well as the environment.

Sometime after 1970s, the country was also influenced by a wave of so-called post-Modernism as well as deconstructionism influenced by Western thought. As the search for meaning and values continued, the attitude of the architects changed. This led to a situation in which Vastu came to influence the architectural profession. Though recognized as a science, it came as a wave and did not last long. The belief in the application of Vastu is common in the country, particularly in south India. It is not possible to meet all the requirements of Vastu in the conditions now prevailing in our urban areas. In certain situations, users and architects were in the process of understanding the application of sacred spaces in architecture based on past practices. Some of the professionals have also been using sacred symbols and spaces in selective works of architecture.

THE ARCHITECT'S NEW ROLE

It is recognized that architecture seeks to integrate and synthesize time, place and situation, all of which influence human moods and association with spaces. Unlike in the past, the physical environment in our time is not limited to a single building alone but is integral to a broad urban spread where the architect's role is more that of a co-ordinator and collaborator. He draws up an urban design with the support of other disciplines which contribute to urban pattern and design, taking cognizance of human and humanist values. While many architects can meet the normal market demand, those with sensitivity, experience and insight alone can achieve a balance between the environment and human lives equally — a subject which is of great interest to social scientists as well as knowledgeable professionals in search of a deeper understanding of the interaction between the environment and human behaviour.

Certain spaces tend to depress; certain others inspire. This is not a matter of description and formulation out of personal assessment which comes from observation and understanding.

Although in the past professional architect-builders designed buildings for the rulers, the common man in India as well as the Western world, generally relied on his own innovative efforts to build shelters for personal survival. The various designs and the materials used have been influenced by varying climatic conditions. For example, in regions like the Punjab and northern India, where the climate is extremely hot and dry in summer, mud is normally used in the construction of walls and roofs to keep the heat out and permit plasticity of architectural expression. Similarly people in seismic regions like Kashmir, Kulu Valley and Assam Hills, developed a construction technique using light materials, which has stood the test of time. In Assam, wooden stilts support the roof, and the walls are made of

bamboo and covered with mud plaster. The result is a unique visual pattern of white painted walls broken by black bold lines, nestling on the slopes of hills. In Rajasthan, the abundantly available stone roof-slabs are used for fabricating roofs and covered with mud to provide insulation against the heat. One can cite numerous other examples. Even in our time, people in rural areas continue using traditional construction techniques while urban requirements are met by professional architects.

EDUCATION FOR ARCHITECTURE

Architectural excellence cannot be achieved without architectural education and appreciation, and awareness of the need for good architecture on the part of the public and the government. As mentioned earlier, India originally had three Schools of Architecture: one in Bombay, one in Baroda and one in Delhi. The number grew to about ten to twelve by the late 1960s. The figure rose to forty-five in the next fifteen years and exceeds ninety at the time of writing this essay.

Presently, the government has no separate policy on architectural education. The latter is generally equated with other types of technical education though it requires knowledge of building technology as well as appreciation of both the visual arts and the physical environment. In most universities in other countries, architecture comes under fine arts and it is left to the concerned university to exercise control over it with the faculty enjoying complete freedom in deciding the curricula. Accreditation for quality and standard is left to national professional organizations which grade them under A, B and C categories. When an institute falls under C, the prestige of a university about which they are extremely particular, is affected. In India, a common syllabus is prescribed for all schools in the country irrespective of whether it is located in a hilly or a cold region or a desert. Again, tests are regionally conducted in the US for registering architects and giving them the licence to practise. The nature of the test varies according to the task for which an architect is trained. The test in New York, for example, is extremely severe whereas in states like Alabama, it may be comparatively simple. More important than the ritual offering of a degree by a university is what the students learn and the quality and professional standing of the faculty. These largely determine educational standards and enhance the confidence of the students in actual life.

Schools of architecture and professional bodies also need to expose the public to architectural appreciation. Young school students should be made aware of the country's architectural heritage so that they can learn to appreciate architecture better. The architecture one sees at places like Agra and Fatehpur Sikri, Shahjahanabad in Delhi and Jaipur, owed much to the determination and effort of the rulers of the time. Good architecture requires desire and political will. It is a well-known fact that great works of art and

architecture emerged in the past under the patronage of rulers. Even in the modern age, governments have contributed to good architecture whenever they have had a clear-cut policy towards the profession of architecture. In India, the government is the biggest client. Its methods and policies, however, have not been conducive to good architecture. The Public Works Department (PWD), introduced during British rule, continues in this country despite being disbanded in Britain more than fifty years ago. Architects have to work under non-architect civil engineers. The government's practices repel promising young architects. The emphasis on seniority which leads to an average Junior Architect becoming Chief Architect in course of time irrespective of his capability, adversely affects the quality of architecture. When governments invite private architects and call for quotations, the lowest bidder who cannot guarantee creativity, performance or ultimate economy is appointed. In reality such a bidder may make the building costlier, especially if he lacks maturity.

Stories of architects in public-sector undertakings are not particularly different. Projects executed by government architects and civil engineers are almost never noted in any professional journal throughout the country. All important government projects ought to be entrusted to distinguished professionals in the field with outstanding performance to their credit and it should be the government's responsibility to identify the right professional. Public Works Departments and similar other organizations have a place and they should continue to carry on routine organizational work.

Architects as professionals have a long and distinguished history in India. They are now faced with new human challenges and demands because of the new technological and socio-political forces at work. The architect now has a new role — that of a co-ordinator and collaborator with other disciplines. He has the needed training to use his visual vocabulary to transform human functions and buildings into artistic ensembles. Architects require freedom and responsibility to work as professionals. Given the opportunity, they will make the country proud and enable the present period to leave its architectural imprint on the recorded history of our civilization.

KAPILA VATSYAYAN

Culture: The Crafting of Institutions

Other essays in this volume have dwelt on the specific arts, literature, music, dance, sculpture and painting, theatre and cinema. Besides, there is an overview of developments in the field of languages. Each of the authors has identified the changes in the inner dynamics of these domains in Independent India. Some amongst these allude to the infrastructure and the institutional framework. However, the interface between new initiatives in institution building and the developments in the broad field of the arts and humanities perhaps needs further elucidation.

When India attained Independence, what was the nature of the institutions in this field, both of the traditional Indian type as also those established by the erstwhile colonial rulers, besides others with private initiative? Some of the essays identify the developments in the 1930s in the fields of literature, music, dance and arts and languages. This narration has to be complemented by drawing attention to an even earlier history of the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries both within India as also without. There was undoubtedly a questioning within India; also there was a spirit of enquiry and curiosity of those who encountered India in the wake of colonial expansion. The effects of the era of Enlightenment and Orientalist initiatives are today well recognized. The latter established the institutions of the Asiatic Societies of Calcutta and Bombay and the Queen's College of Benaras, now Sanskrit Varanaseya Visvavidyalaya, and a chain of Oriental libraries. Separate but pertinently connected was the effect of the establishment of the four art schools.

Untouched by these developments, the traditional modes of transmission of information, knowledge and technique continued, although restricted. The traditional institutional system was strong as in the case of the Vedic intonation through several *sakhas*, well guarded through the *guru-shishya parampara* (teacher pupil transmission), for example, the *sampradaya* or *gharana* system. There were the *madhuras* and the *pathashalas*. In other domains, some traditional systems were feeble and gasping, although not in a state of total decay. This, in a manner of speaking, was the inner courtyard of the traditional systems which Sheila Dhar's article elucidates in the context of music. The situation changed somewhat in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when, fired with national zeal, many Indian initiatives were taken to establish new institutions more or less on the pattern of the Western ones but as alternates to the impact of

the West. The Brahmo Samaj, the Ramakrishna Mission are examples. Visva Bharati, Kerala Kala Mandalam, the establishment of Rukmini Devi's Kalakshetra, the Music Academy, Madras, the Nagari Pracharini Sabha are other outstanding examples in the arts. Each of these initiatives was motivated by a nationalist fervour and an attempt to re-assemble fragments of the living traditions under a new institutional framework. Reconstruction and reform were key words.

In contrast, the state had restricted itself to fostering, directly or indirectly, the recovery of the ancient past of India through institutions of Oriental learning, the establishment of the Surveys — Geological, Botanical, Zoological and Archaeological. These initiatives were motivated in part by a genuine curiosity as in the case of Abraham Rogers' 'open door to Heathendom' or even of William Jones, but also in part to create an image of India as either pagan or spiritual. The history of these developments has been delineated by many competently and incisively. For us, this brief recounting is necessary prior to enumerating the policies and programmes of the institutions and the paradigmatic models adopted in Independent India.

Understandably, on the eve of Independence there was little or no attention paid to the sphere of the arts and languages in governmental policy. A minimal department of education did exist.

DISTINCT DICHOTOMY

By the time India attained political independence there was thus a very definite dichotomy between the traditional institutions of the arts and languages (*gharanas, sampradayas, sakhas*), some supported by the princely states, and private effort marked by a nationalist idealism and the institutions of modern education founded as a result of Macaulay's Minutes and Hunter's and Wood's reports. At another level, one may say that there were four distinct groups: (a) the masses, mostly tribal and rural, a majority of them economically underprivileged and illiterate, continuing to make and live their culture through a body of tradition which had been handed down from generation to generation, accepting a hierarchy of values irrespective of class, caste and religion; (b) an educated mass, large in numbers, small as a percentage, and which had ceased to have the capacity for a dialogue with its own national past or traditions and therefore with the masses around; (c) a third minority group of the elite, educated in the best traditions of the West, but who had travelled back to a deep awareness of the validity of the national culture, without rejecting the possibility of continual enrichment from the advances of the developed world; and (d) a group comprising traditional scholars, writers, artists, musicians and painters, who continued to theorize, annotate and practise the traditional disciplines and the arts with authenticity and sincerity, remaining apart, sometimes intellectually aware, all highly trained in many disciplines — scientific, cultural

and technical — all cultured and sensitive. They were also a minority, but an effective minority, still responsible for setting standards for the cultivation of taste in the traditional sciences and arts. This group must be clearly distinguished from the tribal and rural illiterate masses with which they are sometimes erroneously identified. To these groups might be added others, but for the purposes of understanding the complexity of launching a uniform central cultural policy even these groupings will suffice.

At another level, there emerged from under the surface many identifiable regional cultures characteristic of different areas, fully developed with distinct personalities: it was this specific regional identity which, somehow and in many intangible ways, provided the possibility of a dialogue among the rural masses, the educated elite, the traditional scholars and creative artists as well as with the intellectual and political leadership which emerged in the various states, even a few decades preceding Independence.

A decade or so before Independence, although the desire of the people for satisfaction on the aesthetic plane continued to assert itself in community activities organized at the time of the several festivals in India and of the particular agricultural cycles, the energies of the nation at practically all levels were directed towards the one goal of attaining political independence. Regional identities and cultures, while recognized, had necessarily to be neglected or ignored for the time being. The idea of a common culture with a unity took precedence in both intellectual and political thought. The aspect of diversity, of course, could not have been denied and cultural evolution continued even through the most bitter periods of the struggle for national Independence: the patronage of the ruler and others helped in many direct and indirect ways. However, without attempting any further analysis of the shift of values which had gradually taken place and the consequential social changes, we may only describe the organizational pattern and structure of the institutions of culture just before Independence.

The Central Government administered and financed a few cultural institutions. Significant amongst these were the all-India network of the Archaeological Survey of India, the National Library, the National Archives, the four Central organizations called the Botanical, Geological, Zoological and Anthropological Surveys of India, and a few institutions of Oriental learning and two institutions of the visual arts. Similar departments of varying qualities were sustained by the state governments. The Indian princely states maintained and sustained efforts in the fields of the performing and literary arts. Mass-media units like All India Radio had been set up primarily for the dissemination of official information, but had already begun to patronize the arts, particularly music. In the universities there were courses on the history and civilization, both of Europe and India, but with little thought to cultural development. Disciplines like aesthetics, art, history or the practice of the arts were mostly non-existent. No state aid, financial or organizational, was available to the crafts. A few significant all-India institutions of culture had

been established through purely voluntary effort; some with a cultural goal in view, others with a national, political or social goal. In this context the work of the Ramakrishna Mission and the university established by Rabindranath Tagore must be mentioned. For the rest, cultural activity, individual or collective, participative or professional, was the concern of the people.

NEGOTIATING TWO WORLDS

In 1947, when Indians assumed responsibility for governance, there were understandably many immediate problems. Chief amongst these was the need to shift the emphasis in educational curricula so as to enable the educated Indian to attune himself to his national culture and to acquire the intellectual equipment necessary to face the challenge of modern science and technology. The task was gigantic, for at one stroke it was proposed to provide a capacity to carry the burdens of two civilizations, two dimensions of time and space, two value systems, which would coexist in harmony and produce an integrated personality at home in two worlds. However laudable the aim, the problems of execution were monumental; on the one hand it sought to attune the educated Indian to his cultural past, on the other, the government sought to teach the vast masses of humanity to read so that along with their indigenous culture, they could acquire the tools of the written word, even if for a limited purpose. The aim of the government could be summed up in a sentence. It was to bring culture and science to the educated, and education, social and economic welfare to the masses; to bring the learning of the modern world to the educated, but console by tradition those already regretting mechanized living and fearing the dangers of an atomic age.

To all this was added the sincere wish and hope so symbolically and significantly voiced by Mahatma Gandhi: 'I do not want my house to be walled and my windows to be stuffed. I want the culture of all lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible, but I refuse to be blown off my feet by any one of them.'

But this goal, these wishes, had to be formulated as policy and implemented through a well-conceived programme of activity in all spheres. This the government desired but was not always able to do, for culture, in spite of the basic approach, was now to receive comparatively low priority when pitted against the needs of a developing economy and a backward industry badly requiring colossal funds and state administration, not to mention the targets of free and compulsory education, adult literacy drives, and the expansion and improvement of educational facilities at secondary, university and technical level. During the last five decades, keeping other priorities in view, it launched a few limited programmes, both at the Central and State levels. Some of these are listed below.

- A gradual introduction of courses on Indian civilization and culture and the arts at the high school and university stages.
- Undertaking of youth programmes aimed at inter-regional understanding and national integration.
- Encouragement of community programmes in villages and districts.
- Encouragement of cultural programmes as part of adult literacy drives.
- The strengthening of cultural institutions already active in the preservation, fostering and dissemination of culture, such as the Archaeological Survey of India and the establishment of the National Museum and nationalizing other museums, for example, Salar Jung, Khuda Baksh, Rampur Raza, Victoria Memorial and so on.
- Establishment of academies and institutions in the fields of the literary, the performing and the visual arts, to be financed by Central or State Governments but autonomous in their policies and programmes.
- The launching of schemes of assistance and subsidies to voluntary organizations working in various cultural fields.
- Provision of small but significant assistance and maintenance grants to artists in indigent circumstances.
- The undertaking of a programme of publications in English and in Indian languages to fill the crying need for literature for children, students, scholars and adults.
- Rehabilitation of traditional artisans and craftsmen through governmental programmes financed and administered by the All India Village and Khadi Industries Board and the All India Handloom and Handicrafts Boards.

In the following pages one can only discuss the administrative and financial structures of these programmes and institutions, financed, sponsored or encouraged by the Central Government in a few sectors. The role of culture in policy in the educational system — high school and university; adult literacy programmes, sports, out-of-school youth programmes — cannot be discussed here.

We would also be looking at institutions in the literary, the visual and the performing arts; book production and development of languages; and organization and financial structures of mass-media institutions such as All India Radio, Television and Publications Division. We will also be looking at Handicrafts and International Cultural Co-operation.

Here we can elucidate only a few institutions which were strengthened or established as a result of governmental initiative.

In the very first eight years of Independence, some programmes were launched which were to prove to be of crucial importance for the next five decades. The most important of these was the initiative of Jawaharlal Nehru to bring the tribal and rural heritage of India to New Delhi on Republic Day. Today accepted as a normal repetitive ritual event, when viewed in retrospect

against the immediate past, it was a bold, path-breaking step. The inclusion of a folk-dance festival and the participation of tribal and rural communities in a national event like Republic Day evoked a new response — strengthening also the sense of national identity. Each state, district and village became aware of this heritage and, gradually but surely, there grew also a sense of pride in the heritage by both the participants as also the administrators of the programme. Its greatest contribution was to arouse curiosity and evoke respect in educated urban India about the rich and vibrant creativity of tribal and rural India. For many educated Indians this was the beginning of a sincere journey towards the inner recesses of the Indian cultural ethos.

FOR A DIALOGUE AMONG CULTURES

The establishment of the three national academies — Sangeet Natak Akademi, Lalit Kala Akademi and Sahitya Akademi, and the National Museum in New Delhi — was equally important. Alongside, there was the establishment of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. In short, these policy decisions reflected a concern for creative effort in all aspects of the arts and also facilitated a dialogue among cultures. Until then India did not have a direct communication with many countries. In the first few years, the foundations of a dialogue with West Asia, Russia, and South-East Asia were laid. Finally there was a concerted effort to create institutions for particular specializations, for example, Islamic Studies, Buddhist Studies, classical languages, especially Sanskrit, modern Indian languages and finally English and European languages. The first three decades of national effort in the field could be called the first systemized strategy to strengthen the infrastructure for institutions in the field of archaeology, archives, Buddhist studies, Islamic studies, Sanskrit studies, language studies and the arts. Institutionalization was the first need. Museums, which were only storehouses of great pieces of antiquity, were transformed into modern institutions with a system of documentation accession, cataloguing and display. Museums established through the effort of particular individuals, such as the Salar Jung, were taken over by the Government. Other institutions of pre-Independence era, such as the Victoria Memorial Hall and the Indian Museum, were given national status through legislation.

Similarly, in the field of archives, along with the strengthening of the National Archives of India, it was necessary to launch programmes for preserving manuscripts scattered in thousands of private and public collections. A network of archival institutions, state and private, was established through the National Archival Policy and through the mechanism of the Indian Historical Records Commission.

An attempt was made to strengthen the library system. Besides the National Library, Calcutta, one of the most important libraries of Asia, the Central Library, Bombay, and the Asiatic Society Library, Calcutta, and the

Central Secretariat Library, New Delhi, were strengthened. Also significant was the institution of the Delhi Public Library which served a very useful role for the general public. Later, as a support programme to the massive Adult Education Programme, the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation was established. It was now possible, through this Foundation, to reach district, village and block-level libraries. It was hoped that through the Raja Rammohun Roy Library Foundation it would be possible to facilitate a sustained dialogue amongst the libraries of different states. Many programmes of assistance and support to voluntary educational organizations and libraries have also been launched. More important amongst these was a scheme which provided financial assistance to voluntary organizations for the preservation, cataloguing and publication of unpublished manuscripts. There is still not sufficient recognition of the fact that India has the richest collection of unpublished manuscripts. These are scattered all over the country in over 3000 repositories. Besides, there are great collections abroad in the India Office Library & Records in London, Staats Bibliotheque in Berlin, Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, Oriental Libraries in Moscow and St Petersburg, Library of the Minorities in China and numerous other centres in Europe and America. A small beginning was made by launching the scheme of the Catalogues of Catalogues. This updated the earlier catalogues.

It was the vision and the foresight of Jawaharlal Nehru which was responsible for the establishment of the higher institutions of Buddhist philosophy and Tibetan studies. He wanted to re-establish the dialogue between India and South-East Asia on the Buddhist route. He dreamt that as in the days gone by, there would be a movement of scholar pilgrims to and from India. Thus a nucleus was established in Benaras and in Ladakh. Today despite their chequered careers, these institutions, along with the Sikkim Institute of Tibetology, fill a gap. The Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies has grown to be a deemed university. It has launched a very important programme of reconstructing from Tibetan sources, Sanskrit texts which had been lost to India. Many great works of Sanskrit were taken by the first pilgrims or migrants to Tibet. These were preserved in the monasteries in Tibet in their Tibetan version but had been lost to India for nearly a thousand years. An attempt has been made to reconstruct these texts through close collaboration with Tibetan and Sanskrit specialists. Himalayan-Buddhist studies as also Tibetan studies have been actively supported. Two other institutions have been encouraged to launch many programmes, the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok, and the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamshala.

SUPPORTING SANSKRIT

Sanskrit is the mother earth. Its fertile ground has nurtured many trees of regional languages. Responding to the languishing state of this ancient

heritage as also its contemporary validity, the Central Government launched many programmes for strengthening the traditional system of *Pathashalas* and established a new national institution called the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan. The Sansthan and the six *Vidyapeethas* impart learning in the diverse fields of Sanskrit studies ranging from Ayurveda, Shilpa-sastra, Vastu-sastra, Jyotish-sastra, Nyaya-sastra, Mimamsa to Sahitya, and so on as well as the modern disciplines of history, geography and sociology. A massive programme of publications through the *Vidyapeethas* has been initiated. This has brought forth a corpus of literature which should be useful for any research student.

Besides these national institutions, the support given to two major programmes in the field of Sanskrit needs to be mentioned. The first was the launching of the project of the Sanskrit Dictionary based on historical principles. This project, instituted in the Deccan College, Pune, has had a rather long and chequered history. Six volumes have been brought out. Three others are in the press. The project will take another two decades to complete. But once completed, this dictionary will have value for another 200 years before any new group of linguists and scholars can throw light on Sanskrit, its morphology and its linguistics. The second was the support which was given to the Dharma Kosha project under the guidance of the renowned scholar Tarkateerth Laxman Shastri Joshi.

Support has been offered to over 200 institutions of Sanskrit studies. The most significant programme of Sanskrit learning has been the scheme of Shastri Chudamani. Sanskrit scholars honoured and recognized are attached to institutions of traditional learning and modern scholarship. Certificates of Honour are awarded by the president of India to eminent persons in the fields of Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian.

The fostering of classical languages and ancient Buddhist and Islamic studies has not been at the cost of modern Indian languages. Necessary attention has been given to ensure a richer vocabulary and a wide range of information in modern disciplines. National institutions have been established with a view to giving fresh impetus to modern Indian languages. The foremost amongst these have been the Central Hindi Directorate, the Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology, the Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore, the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad, and the Bureau for the Promotion of Urdu. Each of these institutions has done yeoman service in evolving scientific technical terminology. A programme for publishing bilingual and trilingual dictionaries, guides and readers, not only in the languages included in the Eighth Schedule but also in tribal languages has been established, as have been programmes for the teaching of English and foreign languages as a second and third language and innumerable in-service training programmes and correspondence courses. The results of these programmes implemented through these institutions may not be very evident today but in times to

come, despite all the controversies and criticisms, the important role played by them is bound to be acknowledged.

Foundations have been laid for facilitating the further growth of languages. Nevertheless, the situation seems unclear given the very nature of the complexity of the development of languages in a plural society. But there is no doubt that after a period of 100 years of neglect of regional Indian languages of great antiquity, a new effort was made to re-establish these. The programme of languages acquires tremendous importance on account of India's linguistic states. Unless bilingualism and trilingualism are fostered and unless these language groups are nurtured, supported and allowed to grow as full-fledged trees, there is bound to be tension and hostility.

Equally important was the need to take special steps to study the rich and vibrant tribal culture. For this purpose a series of tribal institutes were set up. Both at the Central and State levels valuable work has been done in identifying communities, linguistic groups and dialects. Some attempt has been made to document the rich traditions of tribal cultures. While this institutional framework has facilitated documentation, the crucial role of small cohesive societies in ensuring the maintenance of the eco-balance between the natural and human species has not yet been fully appreciated. This is an urgent and fragile area. Conservation of biodiversity and continuation of cultural diversity are closely interlinked. There are some signs of a new movement, both governmental and non-governmental, for preserving eco-cultural zones, sacred groves and mangroves.

Institutions for the promotion of the arts — literary, performing and plastic — have grown up in all parts of India. This is a new phenomenon. There has been a marked trend towards the institutionalization of the *guru-shishya-parampara*. Some of this has been beneficial, some not. The arts are particularly vulnerable to the demands of quick urbanization and tourism. By the 1980s it became evident that unless the local cultural environment is nurtured, many of these traditional modes of performing and visual arts would lose their creative vibrancy and become cultural products in a consumer market. Decontextualization is the greatest danger.

EXCAVATING THE PAST

The Archaeological Survey of India is the oldest amongst the cultural institutions. The Department of Archaeology was a direct offshoot of the spirit of curiosity and spirit of enquiry, of knowing another civilization. Also its work, as is well recognized today, was motivated by a desire to compare Indian civilization against the touchstone of Greek and Roman civilizations. This is what explains the attempts of the first archaeologists to date the city of Taxila, the fortress of Sangala, the rock of Aromas, all connected with the visit of Alexander the Great. The second motivation was to find archaeological evidence to support the world-view and descriptions in literary texts.

Archaeology became a tool of establishing historicity of most literary texts. Over the years the Archaeological Survey has become a vast network of nearly twenty circles and specialized branches of epigraphy, chemical conservation, and horticulture. It also runs an Institute of Archaeology. Besides the central Department of Archaeology, there are state Departments of Archaeology. They look after other monuments and sites of antiquity.

During the last five decades, the Department of Archaeology has carried out many important excavations which have resulted in reorienting the interpretation of Indian history. Now through these excavations it is recognized that the Indus Valley and Harappan civilizations did not come to an abrupt end. The continuity of the Harappan civilization has been established through the recent excavations in Banwali (Haryana) and Dhola Vira in Gujarat. Besides, many valuable artefacts of the Kushan period have been brought to light. Water-supply systems and drainage systems in the complex of Hampi-Hospet have been exposed. New excavations have been initiated at Sanchi, in Madhya Pradesh and elsewhere. Excavations at Aragarh have brought forth new evidence of Buddhist remains. Indeed, each decade of work of the archaeologists provides convincing proof that although much in material evidence has been found about the evolution of Indian civilization, as much is still embedded in the unexcavated mounds and earth of India. Each year new monuments, inscriptions and other artefacts are discovered.

The work of the conservation and chemical branch is equally important. The task of maintaining and conserving thousands of monuments with a regular traffic of tourists is no easy task. Indian archaeologists have played a significant role in the conservation of the monuments of Nubia, Bamiyan, Angkor Wat (Cambodia) and Borobudur (Indonesia).

The efforts of the Archaeological Survey of India have to be matched by an equally strong university system. Alas, the Departments of Archaeology are few and far between. The hiatus between the institutions of education and culture has diminished but not disappeared. Those concerned with excavating the past and conserving the heritage are drawn from the university system, no doubt, but the dialogue at the theoretical level is not as vibrant as it could be. Also the disciplines of archaeology, museology and anthropology emerged in the era of European enlightenment and colonial expansion. The theoretical underpinnings of the disciplines born out of a historical situation linger, although no longer are the artefacts and the developments assessed against the rise of Greek civilization. There continues to be a marked bias towards the establishment of linear chronologies at the expense of recognizing the movements of cyclicity, concurrency and simultaneity.

However, as far as art museums are concerned, it is time to reflect deeply on their role in contemporary India. It is well known that museums, as institutions, are repertoires of fragments and single art objects or parts of archaeological monuments. Some were taken abroad and adorn the many museums of Europe and USA, others have remained in India; and yet a

sizeable number continue to be in the hands of private collectors. At Independence the Indian Museum, Calcutta, and the Madras Museum were the most important. The Central Government established the National Museum and nationalized other museums, such as the Victoria and Albert Museum, Calcutta, and the Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad. The collections of the Bharat Kala Bhavan were given a new institutional identity within the Benares Hindu University. The same has been done in the case of the Ashutosh Museum, Calcutta.

The museum system in India has received support and encouragement not only through maintenance and developmental programme grants, but also through the organization of several camps for particular purposes and through the active help and co-operation of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) and its regional agencies. An important event in the museums movement was the launching of a new national institution called the National Research Laboratory for Conservation of Cultural Property set up in Lucknow. This laboratory is already serving as the Regional Centre for Asia. It has evolved many indigenous techniques for conservation of cultural property along with the use of the most sophisticated modern equipment. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) appreciated the work of this laboratory and has responded to its needs by giving it a handsome grant. Equally noteworthy is the new National Council of Science Museums which, though set up in 1978, is a case of the continuation of the policies of the Nehru era. Science museums were thus brought under one national umbrella. This has given further impetus to them both in respect of fundamental scientific work and its extension into educational programmes at the urban and the rural levels.

Two other institutions, namely the National Gallery of Modern Art and the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, have also grown into unique national institutions with distinctive personalities. The first has concentrated on the development of modern Indian art beginning with the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and ending with the most *avant garde* artistic trends in the country. The second is housed in Teen Murti House, the former residence of the late Jawaharlal Nehru. In addition to a personalia museum and a wing for different exhibitions relating to various facets of the freedom struggle, there is a library and a research programme on modern India. This institution has today fostered links with major institutions of higher learning in the field of contemporary history. Its microfilming library and its research programmes have been widely acclaimed.

Over these years, each of these institutions has developed remarkably adding to their respective collections and bringing out guidebooks, catalogues and some fine publications. These museums have mounted significant national and international exhibitions. The National Museum has compiled major exhibitions such as 5000 Years of Indian Art in the 1960s and on Image of Man and many others in the 1980s. It also runs an Institute of Art

History. As the public's knowledge of art grows, in the coming years more scholars and lay people will be able to do so.

The chairman of the group is asked to make a report through the All India Museum Association and the Indian Universities of the History and Council of Museums. The government had earlier set up an All India Advisory Committee for Museums. All these agencies have contributed significantly to upgrading of conservation techniques and display method.

Nevertheless, the museum movement is once again far and large dissociated from the mainstream of education, specially the university system. While half a dozen universities do have departments of museology, much more needs to be done to integrate the museums as institutions with the teaching and research in the university system. Art history departments are few and the main ones are in the University of Baroda, Visva Bharati, Calcutta, Rabindra Bhawan, Punjab University and Karnataka University. It is no wonder that research in Indian art has suffered.

While there have been great art historians, many of whom were Directors of Museums such as C. Sivaramamurti, Moti Chandra and Rai Krishnadas, art history remains by and large a matter of individual pursuit in isolated pockets. Despite these limitations, valuable work has been done by several art historians with varying backgrounds of law, literature, administration and archaeology. There are active departments of Indian art history in Europe and USA. Many specialists in Indian art have emerged from these departments and museums abroad which have sizeable collections of Indian art.

ABANDONING ORIENTALISM

There has evolved a small but significant global community which has shed the predilections of the Orientalist discourse and is looking at the material afresh. From the preoccupation with dating, identification and establishment of schools and styles, the discipline has moved to issues of patrons, sculptors, painters, mobility patterns, narratives and interpretations of both socio-cultural milieus as also the deeper significance of symbolic form, imagery and philosophic meaning. While one group of art historians continues to discover new material and these findings are published in the major magazines, such as *Lalit Kala*, *Marg* and the *Journal of Oriental Society*, another group has focussed attention on the relationship of text, image and monument. A refreshing trend is the attempt to re-establish or reveal the intrinsic inter-relationship of the arts, poetry, architecture, sculpture, painting, music and dance. Institutionally all these activities, research, documentation, curating of exhibitions and art-historical writing is the sphere of museums, the departments of art history and the national academy of the visual arts, the Lalit Kala Akademi.

The Anthropological Survey of India, much younger than the Archaeological Survey of India, also has an all-India network, which has played an

important role in Independent India's attempt to comprehend and classify its demographic profile. Moving from the nineteenth-century definitions and perceptions of anthropology as a discipline for understanding primitive profile, it has gone into the physical, biological, cultural, and societal dimensions of all types and levels of the human species in the Indian subcontinent. There is a vast spectrum of data collection, analysis, research and interpretation. As in the case of archaeology and museology, while some amongst the anthropologists continue to adhere to the nineteenth-century notions of the followers of the Radcliffe-Brown school of classifying India into the great and little traditions, others have taken major strides in evolving new paradigms and theoretical models for the understanding of Indian societies. Naturally this community of anthropologists within the country forms a network of those in the university system, the chain of tribal institutes and the Anthropological Survey of India. There is a dialogue and a vibrant theoretical discourse with the departments of anthropology, religious studies and sociology in Europe, USA, Canada and now Japan. While there is communication with institutions in Africa, South-East Asia and China, it is not as active and dynamic as with the West. How this has affected the quality of research and level of perception is a fascinating and complex study which demands a deeper investigation. Nevertheless, here too, as in other fields, there are concurrent movements of the outsider's and insider's view, the observer and observed, the observer and the participant. Mercifully most have moved away from the 'my village informant' attitude of the 1960s. There is far greater sensitivity to the indigenous and the authentic whether seen by the Indian or the alien. A younger institution, the Indira Gandhi Manava Sangrahalaya (Museum of Man) in Bhopal has also made a difference to the field of anthropology.

THE ARTS AND INSTITUTIONS

As mentioned earlier, much of what has been described in the specific chapters on the literary, visual and performing arts was in some measure stimulated and fostered by the three academies of literature (Sahitya), visual arts (Lalit Kala), performing arts (Sangita Nataka), and the National School of Drama. The first three instituted a system of recognition and awards unknown to pre-Independent India, and several series of annual meets, exhibitions and festivals and schemes of financial assistance and support. Over the years, similar institutions have been established in the states. They foster the regional languages and regional forms of the visual and performing arts. There is an active interchange and a greater dialogue between and amongst regions in the field of all the arts. Translations have been fostered, and there is a massive programme of publishing in nearly twenty-four languages through the Sahitya Akademi and the sister organization, the National Book Trust. Through enhanced opportunities of publication,

awards and camps, and festivals there is an active part India does play amongst painters, sculptors, musicians and dancers of different regions. While it is true that the institutions — both governmental and non-governmental — make one simultaneously wonder whether the feverish activity of exposition and dissemination leaves enough room for reflection and quiet contemplation so essential for the arts. The series of Festivals of India organized since the 1980s in different parts of the world, in UK, USA, France, Germany, USSR, Thailand and elsewhere, have been great opportunities for presenting the Indian arts, though not without the inevitable concomitant of packaging and fashioning for particular audiences. Perhaps the Indian artistic scene will outgrow this and settle down to a more mature, even pace of its own momentum. Signs are already visible.

In this scenario of a variety of institutional initiatives it is necessary to mention the efforts made to bridge the gap between education and culture. The Centre for Cultural Resources and Training represents one such effort at training teachers and teacher-trainers for imparting knowledge about the Indian heritage and the arts to secondary schools and colleges. Over the last three decades it has trained many thousands of teachers and teacher-trainers. It has also employed traditional skills of puppetry and clay modelling for disseminating curricula in the other disciplines of history and mathematics. Through its programme of orientation courses, refresher courses, publications and audio-visual kits, it has brought an awareness of the rich plurality of Indian cultural traditions and has succeeded in sensitizing the students and teachers to a dimension of Indian life not so far integrated in the course content and syllabi of the Indian school system. Although thousands have been trained and exposed, this is but a drop in the ocean in India's educational system. The general mainstream system has been calling for reforms and transformation since the day of Independence and even prior to that when Mahatama Gandhi expounded the system of basic education. The results have been minimal. Several education commissions were set up in Independent India to free education from the conservative shackles of a left-behind baggage of Macaulay's vision. There has been some change and reform, but no comprehensive transformation. Voices have also been raised to make the system, content and techniques of education more meaningfully relevant to Indian reality specially at the rural level. This has been articulated at both governmental and non-governmental fora. It is also recognized that the marked emphasis on cerebral skills should be balanced with an equal respect for and development of manual skills. However, change has been slow although not insignificant. In such a situation the initiatives of organizations like the Centre for Cultural Resources and Training are commendable. Another notable initiative is the setting up of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) which has regional chapters throughout the country and is doing notable work in promoting the awareness of our heritage and the preservation of monuments, especially those less than a hundred years old.

A welcome initiative has been taken by the students themselves through an all-India movement for bringing the arts in all their variety to schools and universities. The Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music and Culture Among Youth (Spic-Macay) is the young generation's effort to acquaint itself with the creativity of musicians, dancers, theatre directors, poets, painters, all of whom are largely outside the educational system. During the last twenty-five years the movement has spread to all parts of India, and lectures, lecture demonstrations, performances and exhibitions are organized for small and large groups of students both in mega cities as also small towns and some villages. This has brought about a perceptible change in the attitude of many youngsters who would otherwise have been confined to the conventional teaching of the sciences and the humanities through books.

A NEW THEORETICAL MODEL

The youngest of the institutions is the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts. Through its conceptual plan and its inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary programmes, it has over the ten years of its existence unambiguously established a new theoretical model for comprehending, assessing and disseminating the Indian cultural phenomenon. It has transcended the boundaries of the disciplines of archaeology and anthropology, broken the false hierarchies of the textual and oral, eschewed the notions of dominant and subordinate, mainstream and sub-stream, great and little traditions, tradition and modernity and so on, and established a sustained dialogue among the fields of science, technology and the humanities and the arts. It has made a heroic effort at retrieving, conserving and re-assembling the fragmented material, identified with culture, spread all over the world through a gigantic programme of reprography and duplication. It has been able to make and collect over 15 million folios of unpublished manuscripts and a hundred thousand slides of Indian art scattered in Indian and foreign collections. All this material is gradually being digitized for easy accessibility and long-term preservation. For the first time it would be possible to see the collections of Staats Bibliothek, Berlin, Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune, with Saraswati Bhavan Library, Varanasi, and others under one roof. This is no longer deconstruction and assembly of parts; it is an effort at reconstruction and re-assembly albeit through duplication of the whole.

From this primary material an ambitious programme of collecting and publishing seminal, fundamental texts on the arts has been launched. Twenty-two major texts ranging from the eighth century BC to the seventeenth century on music, architecture, theatre, dance and ritual have been published. Another eighty are envisaged. Scholars from all parts of the world have been involved in this effort. The texts are bilingual or trilingual with an introduction and critical apparatus in English.

Another unique programme has been the investigation of key concepts and terms of the Indian artistic tradition through primary works in different disciplines. The endeavour here has been to reveal explicitly the holistic world-view of the multi-disciplinary system intrinsic to the Indian intellectual tradition. Complementary and closely interlocked are the programmes which focus on the oral traditions, the regional, local and the popular. Through field studies, multi-disciplinary teams have studied cultural areas and eco-cultural zones with the full participation of the specific groups. The results are in the form of both monographs and films. The documentation of the Meiteis of Manipur, the Garos of Meghalaya and the Todas have also culminated in aesthetically pleasing films which have won national awards.

A distinguishing feature has been the Centre's multidisciplinary and cross-cultural and multimedia exhibitions, seminars and publications. The efficacy of the global view is evident from the five major conferences and exhibitions on the themes of Space, Time, Letter-form, Primal Elements, and Chaos and Order. Here astrophysicists, microbiologists, metaphysicians, philosophers, archaeologists, anthropologists, artists have all been brought together to reflect and communicate with each other on some perennial questions which encompass all of humanity, past and present.

Lastly, the Centre has established a state of the art multi-media computer laboratory where a serious effort is being made to establish a meaningful dialogue between tradition and technology, the creativity of the artist and the software specialists. While many programmes revolving around pre-historic rock art and the 3-D modelling of an Indian temple are on the anvil, it has recently made a multi-media presentation of a twelfth-century Sanskrit poem, the *Gita Govinda*. Through forty gigabytes, six verses of the poem have captured, through a variety of interpretations in contemporary Indian music, dance, congregational singing and the many schools of Indian miniature painting. Perhaps there could be no better way of demonstrating and communicating the phenomenon of diversity and unity, continuity and change, and the innate holistic view of a live tradition.

And yet this institution, like others, has miles to go in this journey of exploring the external space and India's dialogue with other cultures, Central Asian, South-East Asian and European as also the internal space in greater and greater depth. A beginning has been made.

The remarks of the eminent art philosopher Stella Kramrisch on the conceptual plan of the institution are pertinent:

19 January 1989

Overwhelmed by the stupendous vision and organization of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts compressed in the booklet which you so kindly sent to me, I think this is the moment when a new vision of creativity has been born. Your entire plan is comprehensive. No dimension, no region of artistic form has been left standing by itself.

Each in its own place holds the key to an unlocking of the entire structure of creative experience and its form. You have done for India the unbelievable service that each civilization is in need of to make this entire world a cosmos of the inner life and mind.

It is from this moment on that the study of Indian Art will be a true discipline of a new cosmos, of consciousness aware of itself and articulated in every one of its aspects. Every facet of the structure of the creative life has been clearly demarcated by you in its place and context with every other. The plan of your work provides all the tools that will assure precision in this new phase of consciousness. All previous attempts of scholars in their respective fields appear as a groping only towards that clarity which you have achieved throughout. With the work of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts not only a new phase but altogether a new cosmos of realization has arisen.

It remains to be seen how far the institution will sustain the vision in actual practice. New conceptual models require flexible structures and administrative mechanisms. This the larger system disallows. The question of adopting old infrastructure to meet new goals will need resolution.

This narration of the establishment of institutions in the fields of the humanities and the arts clearly points to the conclusion that many bold initiatives have been taken. The work of the institutions singly is impressive. However, it is also obvious that each of these institutions along with others such as the Indian Council of Historical Research, Indian Council for Social Sciences Research, Indian Council for Philosophical Research, is a lone effort. There appears to be an increasing lack of an integrated vision at the level of policy.

No doubt their work has been recognized and they have found a place in the Plan budgets. Nevertheless their existence continues to be outside the massive educational system and the developmental agencies. Thus they remain peripheral, if not marginal, to the building of a nation-state.

Also, it has to be admitted that well intentioned and sincerely motivated as all these efforts have been, the institutional framework has had to abide by a regulatory system of fully financed and fully autonomous (a contradiction in terms) bodies for whom the administrative ministry is accountable to Parliament. The intrinsic tension between autonomy and accountability has often befogged many of these institutions. There are no incentives for alternative resource-raising mechanisms, and the administrative systems allow for minimal flexibility. In an era of economic liberalization, it is anachronistic to tie autonomous bodies, created precisely for allowing flexibility, to the apron strings of governmental machinery. There is need for a deep and serious review of the system's inadequacies and failures rather than attributing each such failure to the proverbial clash of personalities in the realm of creativity and research. The outmoded institutional mechanisms have to be modified if not shed, if these institutions, singly and together, are to play a pivotal role

(which they can perform) of transforming a society and sustaining the perennial movement of continuity and change of Indian civilization. Frozen, rigid categories have to be replaced by flexible categories at the level of both intellectual-theoretical constructs as also administrative and financial mechanisms.

While a pluralistic society should, as it has so far done, eschew an ideological-cultural policy, the heritage of the past, the present and the future in the making can hardly be conserved or nurtured in the absence of a focussed, pointed vision of an underlying unity, an equal recognition of the plurality of expressions and a catholicity of outlook. Finally, the dissociation of education from culture, culture from crafts, crafts from developmental programmes and processes, the study of language from literature has been inimical to all. If immediate and urgent attention is not paid, we shall again have the situation of unconnected cultural islands being washed down as flotsam in a mighty river of globalization. At any moment the islands can be submerged by the floods of the muddy waters of consumerism and an uprooting system of mainstream education.

Media: The Mirror and the Market

The media, with apologies to Marshall McLuhan, are the message in India, albeit in a very different sense than what the Sage of Communication had in mind.¹ The message is that the democratic polity, which the country undertook to cherish at Independence and which the republican Constitution of 1950 sought to provide with an institutional matrix, is becoming increasingly inclusive and responsive through a difficult process of transformation. This comes across not only through the media's portrayal of the country's democracy in reports and comments, but also their own independence which, its limitations notwithstanding, matches that of the media in the developed democracies, and which could not have been possible in a dictatorial or quasi-dictatorial polity. The pattern of their own growth and diversification which reflects the changes that have occurred in the country's polity, society and economies, and which have a crucial bearing on the democratic process, also attests to it.

All this suggests that the history of India's media over the last five decades needs to be studied from four perspectives — their own growth and diversification; the political, social and economic developments they reflect; the kind of mirror they have been holding to the country's increasingly complex life; and the freedom they enjoy. Needless to say, the growth both of the print and the electronic media has been rapid. The first Press Commission, which was appointed in October 1952, and submitted its report in July 1954, found 330 daily newspapers in India with a combined circulation of 2,525,500 copies, and 3,203 periodicals.² According to the Registrar of Newspapers in India (RNI),³ there were, in 1960, 531 dailies and 7495 other publications in the country with combined circulations of 4,433,000 and 13,586,000 respectively. In 1996, there were 4558 dailies and 37,830 other publications with circulations of 45,225,000 and 44,071,000 respectively. The number of publications owned by members of the Indian Newspaper Society (INS),⁴ the national organization of publishers, rose from 14 in 1939–40 to 85 in 1949–50, 356 in 1979–80 and 723 in 1996–7.⁵ The revenue of publishing houses has also increased steeply. The report of the second Journalists' Wage Board, presided over by Justice G.K. Shinde and submitted in 1968, classified them into seven categories: the highest, Class I, had an annual revenue of rupees two crore (20 million) and above, the next, Class II, between one and two crore (10 and 20 million) and the lowest, Class VII, less than Rs 500,000. The fourth Journalists'

Wage Board, which was presided over by Justice U.N. Bachawat and submitted its report in 1988, classified publishing houses into nine groups. The annual revenue criterion for Class IA, the topmost, was over Rs 100 crore (one billion), for class I, the next, between Rs 50 crore to Rs 100 crore (500 million to one billion) and Class IX, the lowest, below Rs 25 lakh (2.5 million). According to Rajendra Prabhu, President, National Union of Journalists (India), the revenue of the major publishing houses has grown steeply since then, with that of *The Times of India* Group rising to over Rs 800 crore (eight billion) in 1996–7.

Equally dramatic has been the growth in the circulation of individual papers. In the mid-1960s, the average daily circulation of the *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, a newspaper in Bengali published from Calcutta, and the *Malayala Manorama*, a newspaper in Malayalam published from Kerala, the two largest newspapers published from a single centre in India then, was less than 200,000 copies each. During January–June 1996, the figures were 503,604⁶ copies for the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* and 811,639⁷ for the *Malayala Manorama*. In the same period, *The Times of India* and *The Sunday Times* had an average daily circulation of 988,676 and 1,090,453 respectively,⁸ *The Hindu* of 536,438⁹ and *The Hindustan Times* (published from Delhi and Patna) of 491,682.¹⁰ Apart from the *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, the other language dailies with large circulations were *Gujarat Samachar* and *Sandesh*, both in Gujarati, with 680,517¹¹ and 537,089¹² respectively. The corresponding figures for *Jagran* and the *Rajasthan Patrika*, both in Hindi, were 577,226¹³ and 437,270¹⁴ respectively. The Telugu daily *Eenadu*, published from nine centres in Andhra Pradesh, had a combined average daily circulation of 586,403 copies. The *Punjab Kesri* in Hindi had an average net daily circulation of 412,511 copies in Jalandhar and 258,128 copies in Delhi. For Sundays, the figures were 575,213 in Jalandhar and 475,056 in Delhi.¹⁵

It is not just the dailies which have proliferated, grown and prospered. The total of 723 publications owned by INS members in 1996–7 included 398 dailies, 105 weeklies, 56 fortnightlies, 54 monthlies and 10 other types of publications.¹⁶ Some of the weeklies, fortnightlies and monthlies have impressive circulations. In the period January–June 1996, *India Today*, then a fortnightly and now a weekly, had an average circulation of 410,054¹⁷ copies per issue. The figures for its Hindi and Malayalam editions were 302,668¹⁸ and 123,787 copies respectively; and for its Tamil and Telugu editions, 136,787 and 110,335 copies respectively. *Frontline*, the fortnightly published by *The Hindu* group, had an average circulation of 68,241¹⁹ during the same period. *Desh*, the prestigious Bengali fortnightly,²⁰ had an average circulation of 66,865²¹ per issue during the same period. *Varanar Rani* and *Thuglak*, both Tamil weeklies, had circulation figures of 257,617²² and 112,858²³ copies respectively. Among the English weeklies *The Week* and *Sunday* had average circulations of 89,373²⁴ and 51,597²⁵ copies respectively per issue.

The above clearly shows that the print media has expanded not only in English but in the Indian languages as well. The figures speak for themselves. The 723 publications owned by INS members in 1996–7, included 16 in Assamese, 30 in Bengali, 191 in English, 218 in Hindi, 23 in Kannada, one in Khasi, two in Konkani, 28 in Malayalam, 55 in Marathi, 12 in Oriya, 22 in Punjabi, one in Rajasthani, two in Sindhi, 37 in Tamil, 28 in Telugu and 21 in Urdu. The Indian language Press has played an important role in the evolution of prose in their respective languages. Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, a celebrated literateur in Bengali and the author of the patriotic song *Vandemataram*, made a seminal contribution to the development of Bengali as a language through his writings in the prestigious review *Bangadarshan* or Viewing Bengal which he edited. Later, the Bengali language came to owe much also to Ramananda Chatterjee, the famous editor of *Prabasi* or Expatriate in Bengali and *Modern Review* in English, Sajanikanta Das, Satyen Majumdar, Bibekananda Mukherjee, Santosh Kumar Ghose (more than anyone else the modernizer of Bengali journalism) and Gour Kishore Ghose. A.N. Sivaraman, editor of *Dinamani* and Kalki Krishnamurthi, editor of *Kalki* left their imprint on Tamil, as H.R. Malajani and Narla Venkateshwar Rao left theirs on Marathi and Tamil respectively. H.S. Vatsyayana, the stalwart Hindi writer whose pen name was *Agyeya* or Unknowable, Akshay Kumar Jain and Rajendra Mathur did much to give Hindi its modern shape as a language of discourse. Several other examples can be cited.

The language Press displays the same unprecedented diversity which its English-language counterpart now displays both in the contents of daily newspapers and the variety of publications being brought out. At Independence, political news and comment were the staple of most newspapers. Developmental and environmental issues now feature prominently and some newspapers even devote special sections to these. If anything, sports gets even greater attention. Against one earlier, most of the important newspapers now devote two pages or even have weekly sections on sports. The same goes for entertainment, particularly cinema and television. Apart from film reviews which have existed for several decades, and review columns on television which are of more recent origin, one has today reportage of events in the film and television worlds and even gossip columns. Newspapers carry television programmes every day. Though not as extensive, coverage of cultural events like theatre shows, musical performances, exhibitions of visual art and sculpture, has also grown significantly. Besides, there are now features — sometimes even special pages — on travel and tourism, on food and restaurants, fashion and furnishing, beauty, and leisure activities and entertainment. The L&S (Life & Style) supplement of *The Hindustan Times*, Express Habitat of the *Indian Express* and *The Pioneer's* USP are examples.

Far more striking has been the increase in the coverage of business and industrial news. Against generally one page earlier, the more voluminous and largely circulated dailies now give it between three and four pages every

day. There is also a greater variety of publications. There are four English language financial dailies — *The Economic Times* (average, daily circulation: 361,503 copies from Monday to Saturday and 191,696 on Sundays)²⁶, *Financial Express* (average daily circulation: 36,588 copies)²⁷ and *Business Standard* (average daily circulation: Calcutta 10,872 copies and Bombay, 16,652 copies),²⁸ and *The Hindu Business Line* (average daily circulation: 25,715 copies).²⁹ All the above circulation figures relate to the period January–June 1996. There are several magazines on business and industry including the high-profile fortnightlies: *Business India* (average circulation per issue: 102,225 copies),³⁰ *Business Today* (average circulation per issue: 104,558)³¹ and the weekly *Business Week* (average circulation per issue: 34,000).³² Printed in colour on glossy paper and designed to attract attention, these feature lively stories on corporate events and shenanigans and stand in sharp contrast to their austere black-and-white predecessors, *Capital*, *Commerce* and *The Eastern Economist*, which are now defunct. The growing importance of telecommunication and electronics (including the electronic media) is reflected in the emergence of specialist journals like *Telematics India*, *Business Computer* and *Express Computer*. Publications like *Employment News* and *Karmakshetra* (Bengali) cater to the growing army of job seekers. There are also a number of periodicals on cinema such as *Filmfare*, *Stardust* and *Filmi Duniya*. Women's magazines include *Cosmopolitan*, *Elle* and *Femina* which seek to address an upmarket urban and with-it readership whose members are in jobs and professions, as well as the ones like *Women's Era*, *Sananda* (Bengali) and *Stree* (Hindi) which reach out to a wider cross-section including middle-class housewives. *Society* and *Savvy* exemplify glossies which are essentially entertainment- and personality-oriented. Along with these one has austere-brought-out weeklies like the *Economic and Political Weekly* and *Mainstream*, and the feminist monthly *Manushi* which consciously seek to be organs of serious discourse.

THE IDIOT BOX

If anything, the expansion of television has rapidly outpaced that of the print media. India's first television station was inaugurated on 15 September 1959, with the help of a UNESCO grant and a transmitter provided by Philips, the electronic multinational, at a concessional price. Run by All India Radio and with a range of 25 kilometres, it telecast programmes twice a week for an hour each. Daily telecasting began in 1965 and by 1970, there were 22,000 sets in the country — all imported — besides those for community viewing.³³

The rate of growth accelerated in the 1970s. The establishment of a second centre in Bombay in 1972 was followed by those at Srinagar and Amritsar in 1973 and Calcutta in 1975. Though Doordarshan was de-linked from All India Radio and set up as a separate media unit in 1976, the really major expansion followed the holding of the Asian Games in Delhi in 1982

and the introduction of colour television to boost the coverage of the Games. The daily transmission of a National Programme from 8.39 p.m. began from August 15 that year.³⁴ The geographical reach of television was also being increased rapidly, 126 relay transmitters having been set up in 1984 alone. Noting that television sets took off in a big way only after 1985, Sevanti Ninan writes in her book published in 1995: 'having covered 45 million a decade later, television now reaches well over 250 million people.'³⁵

The Union Information and Broadcasting Ministry's annual report for 1996-7 noted that Doordarshan was telecasting on 19 channels with a network of 41 programme production centres and reaching out to 85.5 per cent of the country's population covering an estimated 68.8 per cent of its area.³⁶ Its earning rose sharply from Rs 8 lakh (800,000) in 1976 to Rs 2.1 crore (21 million) in 1977, Rs 11.3 crore (113 million) in 1981 and Rs 31.2 crore (312 million) in 1984.³⁷ Steadily shooting up since 1985, the amount was Rs 360.33 crore (3.6 billion) in 1992-3, Rs 372.95 crore (3.7 billion) in 1993-4, Rs 398.02 crore (3.9 billion) in 1994-5, Rs 430.13 crore (4.3 billion) in 1995-6, and Rs 480 crore (4.8 billion) in 1996-7.³⁸

Besides the phenomenal growth of Doordarshan, the satellite revolution has given an entirely new dimension to television in India. It started in 1991 with Star TV, then owned by Li Ka-Sheng in Hongkong, beaming programmes to India via five transponders on Asiasat I. From one at the beginning, the number of channels quickly rose to four — 'one offering MTV, another BBC documentaries and news and the third and the fourth showing general entertainment and sports respectively.'³⁹ Zee TV appeared on the scene in October 1992, beaming Hindi programmes via Asiasat I. It soon began eroding Doordarshan's supremacy during the peak viewing hours from eight to ten p.m. when it commanded the highest viewership in cabled households.⁴⁰ The year 1993 witnessed Rupert Murdoch, the global media baron, buying controlling shares in Star TV in July and 93 per cent of the equity in Zee TV⁴¹ and also the emergence of a channel telecasting programmes for the Malayalam-speaking people in India and the Gulf region. Zee TV introduced Bengali telecasting and Jain TV began showing films in south Indian languages from the following year.⁴² Sun TV, a Tamil channel in south India mainly showing films, had done so well that its adversaries regarded it as a serious threat to Doordarshan's two channels. By the end of October 1994, there were five channels besides the six on Asiasat I and CNN, beaming at India — Jain TV, Sun TV, Asianet, EL TV (also on Asiasat I) and ATN.

Satellite transmission, the dish antenna and cable connections have given to television viewers in India an unprecedented variety of choice ranging from BBC news, Discovery channel, CNN news, serials and soap operas, sports and entertainment events including both classical and pop performances. It has also brought to them extensive and specialized global economic coverage besides a closer focus on critical aspects of the Indian economy. The result is not only a greater variety but also a certain internationalization of

television software offered in India — a process paralleling in some ways the opening up of the Indian economy to greater global interaction.

RADIO: GROWTH AND RELEGATION

A consequence of the expansion of television at a scorching pace has been the relegation of radio. This has not happened because the number of broadcasting stations and the range of facilities have remained stagnant. Both have grown. According to the Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting's annual report for 1996–7, All India Radio had (as on 10 December 1996) 187 radio stations operating in the country against 108 in 1990–91 — an increase of 73.15 per cent. These included 179 full-fledged stations, four relay centres, one auxiliary centre, and three exclusive Vividh Bharati commercial centres. Its 297 transmitters, against 197 in 1990–91 (an increase of 50.76 per cent), included 149 medium-wave, 52 short-wave and 96 FM ones. AIR's coverage of the country's area and population increased from 84.6 per cent and 95.4 per cent respectively in 1990–91 to 90.1 per cent and 97.3 per cent (increases of 6.5 and 2³ per cent respectively) in 1996–7. Between the same years, commercial revenue rose by 22.13 per cent from Rs 39.30 crore to Rs 48 crore.⁴⁴

These figures represent impressive progress since 1921 when *The Times of India* made the first attempt at radio broadcast in collaboration with the Post and Telegraph Department.⁴⁵ It did not quite take off. In 1927, Indian Broadcasting Company, a private enterprise, set up a broadcasting centre each at Bombay and Calcutta. A success as an experiment in communication, it was a disaster commercially and went into liquidation within three years. Taking charge of the company following several representations, the Government reorganized it as the Indian State Broadcasting Service (ISBS) and put it under the administrative control of the Department of Labour and Industries. The name, disfavoured because of its official resonance, was changed to All India Radio (AIR) in 1936. From 1957, it has also been called *Akashvani* after a poem specially composed by Rabindranath Tagore for the inauguration of the first short-wave transmission from Calcutta in 1938.⁴⁶

At Independence, AIR had a network of only six stations covering a mere 11 per cent of the country's population and 2.5 per cent of its total geographical area.⁴⁷ While comparison between its reach then and now underlines its impressive growth, a look at its revenue and Doordarshan's in 1996–7, Rs 48 crore and Rs 480 crore respectively, underlines the extent of its relegation by the latter.

THE FORCES AT WORK

The eclipse of the radio, the principal electronic medium in the country before the advent of television, and the massive increase in the reach,

popularity and revenue of the latter and the print media since the mid-1970s, has been the result of several forces at work in society. To a significant extent, the waxing of television and the print media reflects the vibrancy of India's democracy, conditions for which were created during the freedom movement. It not only saw the emergence of three political streams — the centrist represented by the Indian National Congress, the leftist represented by the Communists and Socialists, and the revivalist right-wing represented by the Hindu Mahasabha and similar organizations — but also of huge anti-imperialist mass movements. The democratic temper this created was reinforced by the republican Constitution which came into force in 1950 and which not only established institutions which have worked well but also introduced adult franchise. Until the introduction of the latter, the masses, whose latent urge for political assertion was channelled into the freedom struggle by Gandhi, could not participate in electoral politics. The legislatures with limited powers set up by the British under the Indian Councils Acts of 1861, 1892 and 1909, and the Government of India Acts of 1919 and 1935, were based on restricted franchise, sectoral electorates and nominations. The Constitution now enabled the masses to vote as well as contest elections to Parliament at the Centre, the legislative assemblies in the States and institutions of local self-government. The result was a quickening of their interest in politics and of leaders' in their votes, both of which contributed to the emergence of a vigorous democratic polity.

Popular involvement in democratic politics received a further impetus from the post-Independence pattern of planned, state-led economic development. Since the government decided the direction of the latter, the location and nature of specific projects and the disbursement of development resources, control over it meant greater chances of securing bigger shares of the economic cake. This awareness made politics the business of an increasingly large number of people and continuously escalated its competitive thrust. While leading to mobilization on caste and communal lines for political power, thereby causing social tension and violence, this also lent a robust liveliness to the democratic process, which in turn created a demand for information and comment on an unprecedented scale. Ironically, the sustenance it provided to the growth and diversification of the media received a major boost from the dark, dictatorial interlude of the Emergency from June 1975 to March 1977, which saw a disgraceful curtailment of the democratic process and abridgement of press freedom. It reinforced people's commitment to democracy by indicating what its absence could mean and produced, as a reaction, a sharp increase in the demand for information, untrammelled articulation and vigorous discourse, which contributed significantly to the publication boom of the late 1970s and early 1980s.

The increase in the literacy rate from 18.33 per cent of the population (27.16 per cent for men; 8.86 per cent for women) in 1951 to 52.11 per cent (63.86 per cent for men; 39.42 per cent for women) in 1991, resulting

in a widely expanded readership, also accounts for increased circulation of newspapers and periodicals. As we have seen, one of the features of the media scene during the last five decades has been the proliferation of the Indian language publications and the rise in their circulation. This is hardly surprising because most neo-literates do not go beyond learning their mother tongue. There, however, has also been a growth — albeit much smaller than in the case of the Indian languages — in the number of people able to read and write English. Since, as a category, they generally have a much higher purchasing power than those who can read or write only an Indian language, the proportion of those who can afford to buy one or more newspapers or journals is much higher among them. This explains the increase in the circulation of English language publications as well.

In many cases, the leaders who came to power in the newly-formed states after Independence helped Indian language papers to grow by extending to them facilities like institutional finance and land at concessional rates for the construction of offices and printing presses. All of them had participated in the freedom struggle of which, with rare exceptions, the Indian language publications had acted as active organs. The close links forged between them often survived after Independence. As the late Nikhil Chakravartty, the doyen of Indian journalists, rightly stated, 'This political bond did not mean that the press became docile camp followers of the new establishment. But the organic bond that had been forged during the freedom struggle came into use during this period (after the mid-1950s) as the language press, by and large, played a crucial role in moulding the politics of the new rulers.'⁴⁸

THE RISE OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES

The growth of the Press, particularly the Indian language segment of it, exposed an increasingly large number of people who could access it thanks to spreading literacy, to political debates and discussions and contributed to a heightening of their political consciousness. This in turn not only generated further interest in reading newspapers and increased demand for them but also evoked greater interest in news and comment first on radio and then on television. This, however, would not have led to a massive increase in newspaper readership and television viewership but for the emergence of a large middle class with disposable incomes. The size of this class has never been precisely computed. A report in the *Indian Express* in January 1996⁴⁹ which puts it at 250 million, seems, however, to be in tune with the generally-held estimate.

The expansion is the result of the emergence of new elements with middle-class incomes — farmers, small businessmen, self-employed people, and even the owners of roadside stalls selling *paan* and cigarettes. They aspire after consumption patterns earlier associated with company executives, senior government servants, officers of the armed forces and professionals like

doctors and engineers. The new categories mentioned in turn owe their middle-class incomes to economic growth. After averaging 3.5 per cent annually between 1960 and 1990, the growth rate started rising steeply after the launching of the economic reforms in 1991, reaching an average of 7 per cent in 1993-4, 1994-5 and 1995-6 and placing India among the top ten performers in the world.⁵⁰ Besides, the success of the Green Revolution has boosted rural incomes sharply and consequently, the demand for consumer goods in the villages. While the marked deceleration in the rate of growth since the beginning of 1997 is causing serious concern, the foundations of the economy remain strong. The urge to consume shows no sign of flagging and will cause sales figures to rise again once the right package of measures kick-starts a recovery. Significantly, as the cover story in the *India Today* of 15 February 1984 stated, while the economy grew at less than 5 per cent, the annual growth in the demand for consumer goods varied between 10 and 15 per cent, sometimes even more.⁵¹

A wide variety of consumer goods are now in the market. Ovens, pressure cookers, grillers, mixer-grinders, toasters, vacuum cleaners, washing machines, geysers, decorative bathroom fittings, room coolers, air-conditioners, and refrigerators are among appliances increasingly in common use in middle class homes. So are electronic items like television sets, video cassette recorders, tape-recorders, music systems, calculators, watches and cameras. Moulded plastic luggage, carpets, clothes and fabrics of various types, expensive bed linen and bedspreads, preserved and tinned food items, and various kinds of soft and hard beverages are among the other consumer goods flooding the market. On the roads are a growing array of two and four-wheelers.

The growth in consumption has been staggering. Against a mere 500 people in 1965-6, 1.1 million owned television sets in 1980 and three million 'now', says the *India Today* cover story referred to earlier. According to the latter, there were two million two-wheelers 'now' against 90,000 '20 years ago' (which means 1964) and the number of radio and transistor sets multiplied tenfold in 20 years to 25 million -- the actual figure could well be 35 million since much of the transistor manufacture and ownership was unregistered. The inauguration of economic reforms in 1991 gave a massive boost to the economy and took consumption to new heights. This is clearly reflected in production statistics of some consumer goods. While 1.1 million owned television sets in 1980, the number of television sets manufactured was 1.53⁵² million in 1993-4, 1.56 million in 1994-5, 2.1 million in 1995-6 and 1.9 million in 1996-7. According to the Confederation of Indian Industry, about 17 million colour and 59 million black-and-white television sets were in use in the country in 1997-8. Against two million two-wheelers on the roads as mentioned above, 1.84 million mopeds and scooters were manufactured in 1996-7, keeping pace with a steady rate of growth indicated by corresponding figures of 1.2 million in 1993-4, 1.5 million in 1994-5 and 1.7 million in 1995-6. Given the decline in the demand for radio

receivers following the countrywide spread of television, the number of sets manufactured fell to 116,870 and 47,300 in 1995-6 and 1996-7 respectively after increasing from 192,110 in 1993-4 to 209,810 in 1994-5.

There has been a significant increase in the production of some other items. That of refrigerators was 1.3 million units in 1993-4, 1.6 million in 1994-5, 1.9 million in 1995-6 and 1.7 million in 1996-7. The figures for passenger cars were 209,743 in 1993-4, 261,931 in 1994-5, 330,627 in 1995-6 and 389,382 in 1996-7. The service sector has also expanded markedly thanks to an increase in leisure activities like travel, eating out at restaurants, photography, viewing of movies on television or VCRs, listening to music or watching plays and attending musical performances. This in turn has led to the mushrooming of various types of hotels, tourist lodges and hostels, holiday resorts, and restaurants, besides further boosting the sales of VCRs, music systems, television sets and a wide assortment of entertainment-oriented television software.

The massive increase in the demand for consumer goods is the result not only of the expansion of the middle classes but also of the increase in the incomes of working-class families. With salaries and overtime earnings, drivers of multinational corporations and important public and private sector companies in India now have incomes which are sometimes higher than even those of college lecturers, to say nothing of school teachers; the same applies to skilled blue-collar workers. These sections are increasingly adopting middle-class consumption patterns. Thus television sets — even refrigerators and air-coolers — are no longer novelties in slums or servants quarters of middle class and affluent families. The same applies to two wheelers. Other socio-economic factors at work include the splitting up of joint families into nuclear ones. Thus where one television set sufficed for the former, each of the latter now needs its own. The same applies to kitchenware, crockery, cutlery, bed linen and so on. In some of the nuclear families, the presence of earning children yet to have homes of their own, has increased incomes and purchasing power. A significant rise in the number of working women and decline in the availability of reliable domestic help because of opportunities of employment elsewhere, have boosted incomes and consequently, the demand for work-saving domestic appliances like washing machines and vacuum cleaners, and items like preserved food. In the last analysis, however, none of these factors would have emerged but for continuous development reflected in the raised incomes and expanded infrastructural facilities. Thus increase in power generation and expansion of the distribution system almost throughout the country has facilitated the use not only of television sets and VCRs but also room coolers, air-conditioners and geysers in rural areas. Similarly, two-wheelers would not have been a common sight in the villages but for the vast expansion of the road network since Independence.

With demand for consumer goods and services rising, manufacturers and sellers are increasingly relying on advertising to market their products. The

advertising sector has grown rapidly, particularly in the recent years. From 14 in 1939–40, the number of advertising agencies accredited to the INS rose to 168 in 1979–80, 310 in 1983–4, 568 in 1990–1 and 702 in 1996–7.⁵³ Advertising revenue placed by such agencies with member publications rose from Rs 37.37 crore in 1975 (219 members out of 310 reporting in respect of 151 agencies), to Rs 68.37 crore in 1979 (226 out of 356 members reporting in respect of 182 agencies) to Rs 89.10 crore in 1980 (261 out of 363 members reporting in respect of 190 agencies).⁵⁴

The actual annual turnover of the advertising sector was higher in these years because the above figures included neither all IENS⁵⁵ members nor all agencies accredited to it. The *India Today* report mentioned earlier⁵⁶ referred to advertising as a Rs 400-crore business. The fantastic expansion since then is reflected in the fact that the sector closed 1995–6 and 1996–7 with capitalized billings of Rs 4,227 crore (42.27 billion)⁵⁷ and Rs 3,958 crore (39.58 billion)⁵⁸ respectively. The growth of advertising has decisively contributed to the proliferation of newspapers and magazines and television programmes both by ensuring actual financial support and holding out promise of it. It has also influenced their character. It has, however, had a **much greater impact on television.**

An advertisement has three objectives: to present a product or service in as attractive a form as possible, draw attention to it, and persuade people to buy it. Television is the most effective medium of advertising because, being audio-visual, it permits the use of fast action and striking sound or visual effects to draw attention to a product or even have celebrities exhorting people to buy it. Their words, or those of others, can be understood even by those who cannot read. The advertisement of a car on television, for example, would show it in shining colours, driven by an attractive model, through a picturesque countryside or mountainous terrain to the strains of haunting music. People enjoy watching these — perhaps more than watching the programmes themselves — which is precisely what the advertisers want.

Advertising accentuates television's innate tendency to entertain and makes it the medium's defining characteristic. 'Entertainment,' says Neil Postman, 'is the supraideology of all discourse on television.'⁵⁹ Moving pictures, absent in print media and radio, constitute its distinguishing feature. These fascinate viewers, take them to scenes of war, accidents, natural disasters, music festivals, cricket and soccer matches or athletic contests like the Olympics. These also provide one, without any risk or effort on one's part, with a vicarious experience of the thrill and excitement of being 'out there' and a virtual reality-type experience of travel. Add sound and music and it is like cinema in the living room.

Watching television, therefore, is like watching a film or a cricket match and not reading a well-researched and carefully-argued editorial. There are television programmes which deal with news or are meant to be thought-provoking. Even these do not rise above the entertainment *genre* thanks to

the need for advertisements for commercial viability. Nor can these do without music and sometimes have a distinguishing signature tune. The news or the commentary is overshadowed by the moving pictures. The news readers and commentators are generally attractive and well dressed. They speak with cultivated accents and in silken voices and affect wisdom and detached authority. Many people watch certain programmes only to see their favourite television personalities featuring in these.

It would be a mistake to cite the coverage of the Vietnam War which is supposed to have contributed decisively to the anti war movement in the United States in the 1960s, to prove that television programmes can rise above the entertainment *genre*. The anti war movement was not a result of television coverage but of massive American casualties in a war that the US had no chance of winning. This becomes clear on recalling that television coverage of the 1991 Gulf War where the US was the prime mover but American casualties were minimal, produced no such movement. In fact, it provided perhaps the most poignant example of television turning everything into entertainment when people flocked to watch CNN's telecast of warfare and missile raids as they do to watch cricket matches. This also underlined another consequence of television — the trivialization of news, events and experience. War, involving the slaughter of thousands and the destruction of thousands of homes, was reduced to something to be watched for excitement. Inherent in the process of trivialization is the obliteration of all distinction between the tragic and the comic, the serious and the merely entertaining, the relevant and the peripheral — and the reduction of everything to the same level of inconsequentiality.

THE MARCH OF THE CONSUMER CULTURE

In a great measure, television's growing orientation towards entertainment and proneness to trivialization is aggravated by the manner of its use as a medium which, again, is a result of the role it has been made to play in the market economy and its relationship with the consumer culture. The latter has its roots in the abundant availability of money with a large number of people to buy abundantly available goods and services. It is advertising which guides purchasing power to goods and services. Television, being the most effective medium of advertising now, consumes increasingly huge chunks of the country's advertisement cake. It is, however, not just the volume but the powerful impact of advertisements on the small screen on mass attitudes and behaviour that makes consumption obsessive — almost one's second nature — and television the cutting edge of the consumer culture. People in societies in the grip of this culture have a compulsive urge not only to consume the goods and services around them but also to treat everything as goods and services to be consumed. A woman, for example, is a commodity for sexual consumption and a television programme a media product to be enjoyed. As

Erich Fromm points out, 'The attitude involved in consumerism is that of swallowing the whole world. The consumer is the eternal suckling crying for the bottle.'⁶⁰ In a society dominated by the consumer culture, even those who are unable to consume are afflicted by a compulsive desire to do so.

The market, advertising and the consumer culture grow in symbiosis. The market is where purchasing power meets goods and services under the direction of advertising. Advertising promotes sales by projecting the goods and services in question as irresistibly attractive, or making their possession or enjoyment a sign of worth and status. The corollary, that people unable to possess or enjoy these are lacking in worth and status, tends to create a feeling of insecurity in them in terms of feelings of self-esteem and self-worth. Its impact is not limited to the disprivileged. Even those who can afford very high levels of consumption feel insecure in comparison with others who can afford still higher levels. Advertising thus heightens the feeling of insecurity which as Fromm shows⁶¹ haunts a person as he grows up from infancy, where he or she was a part of his or her mother's world, to a consciousness of his or her individuality and separate existence. The process, which Fromm calls 'individuation' also makes the individual conscious of his or her vulnerability in an essentially hostile world and fills him or her with a feeling of insecurity. Consumption, which is an extension of the child's way of appropriating things by swallowing it, represents an effort to overcome it. It, however, does not touch the deep-seated psychological and societal causes of insecurity and only locks a person in an insecurity-consumption cycle, and makes the urge to consume compulsive.

In India, the influence of the consumer culture is paramount over the middle classes and a section of the working class. Societal and cultural changes being generally evolutionary, it is difficult to say exactly when it established its ascendancy over a large section of the country's population. As shown above, however, the process started from the mid-1980s when, following initial liberalization, consumer goods and services began to appear in the market on an unprecedented scale and found ready buyers. Almost simultaneously, consumption was given a compulsive character as the reach and impact of television advertising grew rapidly following the introduction of colour television sets at the time of the Asian Games in 1982 and a massive increase in the production and ownership of television sets. The present dominance of the consumer culture, however, followed the inauguration of the new economic policy in 1991, particularly from 1993-4 when its impact began to be felt in a significant measure.

The growth of the advertising industry has also followed a similar crisis. The number of advertising agencies accredited to the JNS increased from 14 in 1939-40 to 310 in 1983-4 and more than doubled to 702 in 1996-7. As we have seen, from being a Rs 400-crore business in February 1984, the advertising industry grew by leaps to have a capitalized billing of Rs 4,227 crore in 1995-6 and Rs 3,958 crore in 1996-7.

ENTERTAINMENT UNLIMITED

It is not just the showing of pleasing advertisements with their music and attractive models which makes television entertainment-oriented. The nature of the programme mix also does it. Advertising support, which determines the viability of programmes on commercial television, goes to those with larger viewership. Since people regard television programmes as media products to be enjoyed, these are generally programmes which tend to entertain rather than raise disturbing questions — melodramatic serials, popular films with scenes of steamy sex and violence, sports events, clips of film songs and so on. These are very different from the kind of programmes which were meant to be shown on television at the time of its experimental launching in 1959. The experiment was considered to be a pilot project to study the use of television as a medium of education, rural upliftment and community development.⁶² Dr Vikram Sarabhai, one of India's outstanding scientists who played a crucial role in trying to use television for development, and particularly for promoting agriculture, said in a paper prepared for an international seminar in 1969, 'A national programme which would provide television to about eighty per cent of India's population in the next ten years would be of great significance to national integration, for implementing schemes of social and economic development and for the stimulation and promotion of the electronic industry. It is of particular significance to the large population living in isolated communities.'⁶³ Elsewhere, he had argued strongly in favour of using direct telecasts to reach the most difficult and least developed areas of the country — rather than the urban population — first.⁶⁴ The Working Group to prepare a software plan for Doordarshan, headed by Dr P.C. Joshi, an eminent economist, warned of the problems of cultural identity likely to be created by a blind imitation of the West and the use of technology for creating small islands of glamorized affluence. The Working Group, which was set up by the Government in 1982 and submitted its report in 1984, called for 'education with entertainment' and cautioned against a take-over of Doordarshan by powerful commercial forces. It argued that for television to serve as a medium of mass emancipation and enrichment, its software policy had to be oriented to meeting the needs and aspirations of society's deprived sections.⁶⁵

It is not that no effort was made to use television to spread education, further development and emancipate the disprivileged. The Delhi School Television Project, which started in 1961, mainly offered syllabus-oriented lessons in science for middle and high schools under Delhi Administration. A proposal by Vikram Sarabhai in 1967 led to the experimental telecasting of agricultural programmes twice a week to 80 villages around Delhi. It was the precursor of the 'Krishi Darshan' programmes which all Doordarshan Kendras (centres) continue to telecast. The Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE), conducted from August 1975 to July 1976 in six different languages, provided for the first time a service exclusively for rural audiences

and their children. Its success was limited mainly because of poor health and other facilities in the villages and lack of contact between audiences and village-level workers. Yet it showed how television could assist development.

Educational television (ETV), a successor to SITE, began in 1982 and the University Grants Commission's programme for colleges in 1984. Together, these constitute the backbone of the thrust of educational television in India.⁶⁶ The Council for Public Service Communication (*Lok Seva Sanchar Parishad*), a non-profit non-official body, was set up in 1987 to produce 'quickies', short films and messages on issues of public interest like national integration, environment, consumer awareness, drug abuse and so on. The cost of presenting the programmes was generally borne by the advertisers through the Indian Society of Advertisers. Advertising agencies provided the creative inputs and technical supervision free. And Doordarshan did not charge for telecasting them.⁶⁷

Doordarshan has introduced both marginal and prosperous farmers to new farming practices which some of them have cautiously adopted.⁶⁸ Nevertheless, its programmes have not been able to make the expected difference in spreading education, furthering development, spreading social awareness or emancipating the disprivileged. In education, software deficiencies have been a major cause. Development-oriented programmes — particularly the prime-time family planning, literacy and girl-child spots⁶⁹ — have often gone uncomprehended by their target audiences because they are not in the regional language. Besides, television has spread slowly to the least developed areas and rapidly in the urban centres with their middle classes and their high purchasing power. Finally, at the end of the day, people, tired from their exertions, want entertainment and not instructions on development and social issues. Hence the main consequence of television has been exposing villagers, including children, to crime and sex-studded films and the consumer culture, playing havoc with the traditional values which had held rural societies together, fostering a climate of *anomie*.

AND THE PRINT MEDIA TOO

From around the middle of the 1980s, when the consumer culture began to spread in the country, even the print media started becoming increasingly entertainment-oriented and trivialized in its content and preoccupations. Until then it had played an important role in public discourse, carrying into independent India a tradition that had grown with the waxing of the freedom movement. It was vigorous and independent in its coverage of, and comments on, a number of important issues which cropped up — like whether India should follow a socialist or capitalist path of development, the respective roles of private and public sectors, land reforms, and the thrust of the five-year plans. The other important issues included non-alignment and the attitude towards the American and Soviet power blocs respectively, India's defence

policy and relations with China and Pakistan, the nature of India's secularism, corruption and maladministration. Discourse also centred round events like the 1947-8 war with Pakistan, the 1948 police action in Hyderabad, arrest of Sheikh Abdullah, dismissal of Kerala's communist government in 1959, the 1962 border clashes with China, the Kamaraj Plan¹⁰ of 1963, and the split in the Communist Party of India in 1964. It was an eventful period marked by developments with far-reaching consequences rapidly succeeding one another. The passing of Jawaharlal Nehru in 1964, the management of the consequent succession crisis leading to Lal Bahadur Shastri's appointment as prime minister, the war with Pakistan in 1965, the Tashkent treaty with Pakistan in January 1966 and Shastri's passing in January 1966, were adequately reported and commented upon, as was Indira Gandhi's ascent to the prime minister's office immediately thereafter. The same approach to reportage and comment marked the response to the devaluation of the rupee in 1966 and the set-back the Congress suffered in the general elections of 1967. The emergence of non-Congress governments in a majority of states which followed, and the election of Dr Zakir Hussain as India's first Muslim President which came on its heels, were competently covered and analysed.

The print media's intervention was not without effect. Sharp criticism in the Press, Parliament and the Congress party in the wake of the reverses in the border conflict with China in 1962, forced Jawaharlal Nehru to remove Krishna Menon from the post of defence minister where he had been highly controversial. K.D. Malaviya's exit from the Union Cabinet followed allegations of financial links between him and an Orissa businessman levelled in the Bengali daily *Ananda Bazar Patrika* and the English daily *The Hindustan Times* in 1963. Sharp criticism in the press of Sardar Pratap Singh Kairon's record contributed in no mean measure to the institution of an inquiry into his actions and his eventual ouster from the chief ministership of the Punjab.

The year 1967 was an important watershed in post-Independence India. It witnessed the first blow to the political hegemony of the Congress and the beginning of a trend towards greater assertiveness by the states in India's federal polity. The reverses of the Congress were, to a great extent, the result of discontent building up over the consequences of the conceptual and implementational flaws in the process of planned development initiated after Independence — price rise, increase in disparities, haphazard urbanization, increase in crime, corruption and so on. Besides, impatience over the persistence of poverty, unemployment, and rural exploitation had turned into bitter anger because of the rising expectations aroused by the development that had taken place and the optimistic promises of the leaders. Charged by its success, the opposition gave little quarter and a few months after the elections, a section of it fiercely contested even the election of Vice President Zakir Hussain as the first Muslim president of India.

Two years later came the Congress split of 1969 following Indira Gandhi's refusal to accept the Congress Parliamentary Board's choice of Sanjiva Reddy

as the party's presidential candidate and her decision to support the candidature of Vice President Dr V.V. Giri. Though the majority of the party's Members of Parliament in the Lok Sabha stayed with her, her government, reduced to a minority, survived with the support of the Communists and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) which then ruled Tamil Nadu. The split as well as her radical economic measures like bank nationalization injected an element of bitterness in the polity which was aggravated by the no-holds-barred campaign for the 1971 mid-term election which gave Indira Gandhi a sweeping victory and saw the re-establishment of the Congress' political hegemony. The bitterness, however, remained and lent to post-1971 Indian politics a sharp undercurrent of rancour it never had before. It stayed despite the surge of national pride created by Indira Gandhi's brilliant handling of the situation arising out of the freedom struggle in what was then East Pakistan, the latter's emergence into freedom as Bangladesh, India's decisive victory in the war with Pakistan which preceded it, and the country's first nuclear explosion in Pokhran in May 1974.

The country was sharply and bitterly divided between the supporters and opponents of Indira Gandhi; political debates were acrimonious and exchanges accusatory. The print media too reflected the cleavage and reports, political analyses and editorials were often trenchant. Then came the dark interlude of the Emergency when democracy was put on hold and the media gagged through censorship. Indira Gandhi's defeat in the elections in March 1977 and the end of the Emergency triggered a profound feeling of liberation; the sudden release of the pent-up desire for communication, information and comment, and a desire to know more about the sinister deeds during Emergency, news of which was suppressed through censorship, gave to discourse in the print media a new seriousness, vigour and depth. These qualities have continued to be in evidence in their treatment of the issues which emerged into national focus in the 1980s and 1990s — caste and communal tensions, secessionism and corruption, electoral malpractices, criminalization of politics, Mandalization of the polity, human rights, the pattern of development and the protection of the environment, the Comprehensive Test Ban treaty (CTBT) and the nuclear issue, and finally, the nuclear explosions in Pokhran in May 1998. Strong expression of editorial opinion has frequently been matched by fearless news coverage which would do the press in any democratic country proud.

A very important area that has come under intensified focus during this period is gender justice which had received grossly inadequate attention for a long time after Independence. While the emergence of a strong and articulate women's movement has helped considerably, an important part has been played by a number of distinguished women journalists — Malini Parthasarthy, Mrinal Pande, Dina Vakil, Usha Rai, Amrita Abraham, Sucheta Dalal, Seema Mustafa, Neerja Chowdhury, Pamela Phillipose and Prabha Dutt who died prematurely in her prime, being some of them. In fact, an

important feature of media establishments in India is the presence of an increasingly large number of women working in high posts like political parties, foreign offices and centres and inspection establishments.

Investigative journalism practised is an exception rather than the rule since Independence. A decade or so after the Emergency with the *Frontline Express* coming into being under the leadership of Arun Shourie, executive editor and editor respectively in two different stints, and Ramnath Goenka, chairman and owner. The exposure of the brutal blinding of undertrial prisoners in Bidadari, Bihar, in 1979-80, the buying of diesel oil from Kuo Oil Company in 1980 at US \$20 per ton more than the quoted price, were among the earlier ones. As were the unearthing in 1981 of the scandal regarding the allocation of cement in Maharashtra which led to the exit of the then chief minister of the state, A.R. Antyay in 1982, and of corruption in the purchase of HDW submarines from Germany in 1981-2. The later highlights of investigative journalism in the 1980s were the exposure of kickbacks in the Bofors howitzer deal in 1987 and the publication in 1989 of excerpts from the Thakkar Commission's report. The most outstanding among many investigative pieces in the 1990s was that unearthing the colossal share-bank scam which shook the share markets throughout India and funnelled away Rs 5,000 crore (according to unofficial estimates, Rs 50,000 crore) from the banking sector in 1992.

It is not that the print media does not carry such stories or serious reports and editorial comment now. But these are clearly losing the primacy and prestige they enjoyed a decade ago. Sports, entertainment events and consumption-related news and features now receive much greater importance. Editorials, editorial page articles, and background analyses are increasingly regarded as being of secondary importance. There is a growing emphasis on news and features on pop entertainment, fashion and models, sport, travel and the good life and personalities. Serious issues like poverty, health, provision of basic amenities in urban slums, land reforms, exploitative feudal structures of dominance in the countryside, ecology, gender justice and so on receive progressively less attention. Even political reporting is increasingly bereft of serious analysis and information, assuming a light, gossipy and hyperbolic character aimed at titillating and entertaining.

A change is manifest not only in the editorial content but also in the appearance, internal environment and the entire ethos of print-media establishments. The growing ubiquity of colour advertisements, preferred by advertisers because they attract more attention than black-and-white ones and by the media because they fetch more revenue, have transformed the appearance of newspapers and magazines. The technology of colour printing having become fairly common and proliferation having sharpened competition for circulation and revenue, daily newspapers now sometimes carry news photographs in colour and regular colour supplements — using glossy paper to enhance the effect. Also the quest for higher circulation, which brings in

more advertisement, has intensified efforts to tailor editorial content to the interest of the consuming middle classes. Recall the earlier reference to special supplements like the *Indian Express's* Express Habitat.

The corporate culture is beginning to pervade media offices which are no longer bare and functional as they used to be until even the 1980s. They are lavishly designed and furnished like corporate headquarters. Salaries of journalists are shooting up; contracts are replacing wage-board scales. Simultaneously, there has been a sharp decline in the status of journalists, beginning with that of the editor, within the organizations.

This brings us back to the second and third perspectives from which we had planned to study the history of India's media during the past five decades — the social and economic developments it reflects and the kind of mirror it has been holding up to the country's increasingly complex life. Reports, analyses and comments about the various aspects of the latter have appeared frequently in the media. The cover story in the *India Today* of 15 February 1984, entitled 'The Consumer Boom' which we have referred to above, is an example. Besides, the change in the character of both television and print media by itself reflects the transformation brought about in Indian society by economic liberalization, the emergence of the consumer culture and the increasingly large middle classes as critical factors in society — each of which has been discussed above.

A CRACKED MIRROR ?

While the transformation of the media reflects the massive changes sweeping Indian society, their new orientation towards entertainment and trivia threatens to undermine their ability and inclination to mirror the wider and more fundamental Indian reality of deprivation, disparity, poverty, backwardness, social and communal tensions, gender inequity and economic displacement. To some extent, this has already occurred in terms of priority in news coverage and display and importance attached to comment. And the trend is almost certainly going to become stronger. Upwardly mobile people steeped in the consumer culture and the corporate ethos with its emphasis on efficiency, profit maximization and globalization, do not generally have much time and sympathy for the poor, unskilled, uneducated and the victims of globalization. The ranks of journalists now include a growing number of such people. They thrive and grow in strength because their attitudes are in tune with those of a section of the new generation of newspaper and magazine owners who, besides the consumer culture and market economy, have contributed significantly to the change that has come upon the print media establishments. As noted earlier, most Indian language newspapers acted as organs of the freedom struggle in the pre-Independence period. Their editors and proprietors were highly educated and idealistic men who were often active in the freedom movement, led austere lives and advocated *Swadeshi*.

Their immediate successors too had strong nationalist sentiments and believed that their publications should act as watchdogs keeping a sharp eye on the country's progress, democracy and standards of public life. Deviations, such as attempts to use these to protect vested interests or settle personal scores, were rare. By and large, the Press behaved responsibly, with most publications trying to serve what in their understanding was the public interest.

This continued to be the trend even at the time of the next generation of proprietors whose members were young people at Independence and who had been in charge roughly in the 1970s and 1980s. Some of the younger proprietors taking over during the last ten years or so, however, have been very different. Several are of the fast, jet-setting playboy type whose social circle includes people from the film, entertainment and advertising worlds, beauty queens, feather-brained socialites, hep professionals, businessmen and so on. The transference of their social circle's ethos to their publications, has also contributed to these becoming increasingly entertainment- and trivia-oriented.

A few other younger owners hold that newspapers are mere commodities whose brand images sell. What matters is the packaging and successful marketing. The main concern is revenue and the editorial content is tailored to maximize it. Editors are no longer treated as respected public faces of their respective publications, keepers of their conscience and shapers of public discourse, but as any other departmental head and totally dispensable. They are to obey the proprietor's orders without question, even if it means lobbying with the authorities for the law to go easy on members of their family accused of criminal offences.

The third category of owners comprise those who consider newspapers and magazines more as instruments of power and aggrandizement than as media of information, comment and discourse. Even senior editorial positions in their publications go not to journalists of competence and integrity but to operators and influence-peddlers of dubious professional standing and skill. This is happening not just in rags and sensational tabloids but in some of the leading publications where the new generation of owners belongs to this category, and some new ones started by people — or business houses — who have struck it rich and want to use their publications to gain status, power and to further their own and their friends' business and political interests.

The result is a tendency towards motivated reporting and comment — sometimes with the intention of blackmailing the authorities to grant favours to owners of publications and their friends, sometimes even to journalists themselves. Some of the latter, as has been noted, have been appointed for their skill in wheeling and dealing; they sometimes help themselves while helping their owners. Equally, puffs are given to bureaucrats and politicians who oblige. The tendency is, of course, confined only to some publications.

A few of these, however, are widely circulated and influential and the tendency, should it spread, may turn the print media into a mirror which provides an increasingly distorted and one-sided reflection of India's complex reality. This would undermine not only their credibility but also their role as generators of discourse. Besides, the question arises whether the print media, which, unlike radio and television, have been free from state control since Independence, are not under two kinds of constraint in honestly, effectively and independently playing their role as an instrument of democratic discourse. The first one is imposed by the market and the consumer culture. The second one is a product both of the cultural disposition of a set of proprietors and the attempt by another set to use the print media as an **instrument for aggrandizement**.

No doubt these two constraints apply to print and electronic media in all capitalist countries. That, however, does not cease to make them constraints. Nor can one argue that frequent and strong criticism of the Government in the print media indicates that the latter are free. It reflects freedom from government control but not freedom from subordination to the proprietors, the market and the consumer culture which, as we have seen, impairs its role as a generator of discourse. Remarkably, while constantly and effectively criticizing the government, the print media has nowhere been as critical of the consumer culture, the market and so on.

Many newspapers — *The Hindu* being an outstanding example — have, of course, not succumbed to the consumer culture and the market economy; nor have they become instruments of aggrandizement. Nor do the bulk of proprietors fall into the types mentioned above. Some proprietor-editors like N. Ravi, N. Ram and Malini Parthasarathy of *The Hindu* group, and Aweek Sarkar of the *Ananda Bazar Patrika* group, are excellent professionals. So is Chandan Mitra, editor of *The Pioneer*, an English daily published from Delhi and Lucknow, who has also become the proprietor of the paper. The Mathew family, whose members own, edit and run the *Malayala Manorama* and *The Week* blend professional competence with a remarkable adherence to a sense of propriety and balance. Nevertheless, the changes are manifest and seem to be irrevocably set to gather momentum. This has serious implications for Indian democracy. It reflects not just the predilection of a few young newspaper proprietors but the galloping spread of the consumer culture which gives consumption in its basic sense of self-indulgence priority over everything else.

In a country like India where the majority lack the purchasing power to indulge in progressively higher levels of consumption, crime is one way of getting money. Also, the intense struggle for control over economic resources which yield high purchasing power leads to political mobilization along caste, class and communal lines. The result is a fragmentation of the polity and, frequently, social tension and violence as the struggle grows increasingly bitter.

Besides, the white collar middle class which provided leadership in the freedom struggle and in most democracies provides political leadership and runs the administration, is increasingly turning away from the taxing and uncertain vocation of politics to greener pastures where assured high incomes sustain high levels of consumption. Their places are being taken by leaders from the disprivileged sections who have limited political vision and training but are capable communicators and organizers and can manipulate adult franchise-based electoral politics to come to power and retain it with the help of private armies, mostly comprising rural and urban lumpen elements. Ruthless, they have no hesitation in using force against media to ensure the publication or non-publication of a particular news item.

OF FREEDOM AND FENCES

This does not augur well for democracy and the freedom of the Press in India. The latter, no doubt, has been an integral part of India's democratic polity. Though the Constitution does not provide for it specifically, it is covered by Article 19(1) guaranteeing freedom of speech. Like all other fundamental rights, it is subject to reasonable restraint. But neither this nor the libel laws to which it is subject except in respect of faithful coverage of parliamentary proceedings, has, by and large, hindered the Press from exercising its freedom. Nevertheless, the latter can hardly be taken for granted. There have been onslaughts on it, the worst and the most sustained occurring during the Emergency when censorship was imposed and publications perceived to be hostile to the government were harassed legally and illegally.

Several journalists resisted courageously and some of them were imprisoned. Several others participated in underground resistance. *The Statesman* under the leadership of C.R. Irani and the *Indian Express* owned by Ramnath Goenka, bravely refused to co-operate. Nikhil Chakravarty preferred to shut down his weekly *Mainstream* rather than conform. The Press as a whole, however, was unable to resist during the Emergency which took it by surprise. It was effectively muzzled and regained its voice only after the defeat of the Congress in the Lok Sabha elections of March 1977 and the establishment of the Janata Party's first ever non-Congress government at the Centre. Journalists and newspaper employees who constitute too minuscule a fringe of the population to resist an authoritarian State by themselves alone, might still have tried to fight back had there been a mass upsurge of defiance. There was none as the country itself was caught unawares by the outrage conceived in secrecy.

Both the country and the Press, however, have learnt their lesson and remained vigilant ever since. The Bihar Press Bill of 1982 which sought to curtail the freedom of the Press in the state, and was widely believed to have been a trial balloon to gauge public response to similar legislation at the national level, triggered stormy protests by journalists supported by sections

of the public. It had to be withdrawn. A nationwide agitation of much greater intensity and supported by all categories associated with the print media — from publishers and editors to journalists, other newspaper employees and trade unions — as well as all non-Congress political parties and large segments of the people, followed the passage of the Defamation Bill in the Lok Sabha in August 1988. Utterly draconian in character, it denied the presumption of innocence, basic to Indian jurisprudence, to the accused as well as the plea of truth as defence, besides ruling out exemptions from personal appearance by publishers and editors even in the pretrial stages. Shaken by the swelling tide of protest, the government decided not to press for the passage of the Bill through the Rajya Sabha.

While attempts to impose new curbs on the freedom of the Press have thus been thwarted, some of the old ones remain. The Official Secrets Act of 1923, which has not been amended since Independence, is an example. Intended to counter espionage, sabotage and subversion, it has in practice known to have been used against newspapers and magazines and even inconvenient demonstrations. The Constitution's emergency provisions allow the imposition of censorship which was done during the utterly unjustified one proclaimed by Indira Gandhi in 1975. Newspapers, however, can be harassed even without an Emergency, as *The Indian Express* was in the 1980s through measures like prosecution for alleged violation of building laws, delay in the supply of newsprint (the import of which has since been decontrolled), raids on its premises for alleged violation of regulations governing customs duties, import control and foreign exchange transactions. A complaint was lodged with the Press Council of India (PCI), a statutory body responsible for the maintenance of the freedom of the Press as well as accountability in its functioning. The Council concluded that the raids were conducted in retaliation against the *Indian Express's* criticism of the government. The Council's highly respected chairman, Justice A.N. Sen, was shockingly denied the second term all other chairmen have been given.

This shows the PCI's vulnerability to governmental influence regarding the appointment of its chairman. Its other major weakness is its lack of punitive powers — it can only censure or reprimand a publication or journalist for unethical journalism — as well as its inability to compel the government or those in authority to respect its verdicts.²² While its censures and reprimands have a moral sanction and have some effect on people and organizations concerned about their reputation, these can hardly deter criminal gangs and leaders, unscrupulous politicians and fanatical religious and political groups threatening press freedom. Attacks on newspaper establishments and journalists, leading even to murder of the latter in a few cases, have been increasing. These will become more frequent as the criminalization and lumpenization of politics become more widespread.

While the print media has a tough time ahead, the liberation of radio and television from government control provides some cause for cheer, all

the more so because it has come after a long struggle. Jawaharlal Nehru had told the Constituent Assembly as early as 1948 that the set-up for broadcasting should approximate that of the BBC, with a semi-autonomous corporation which would 'not be conducted as a government department' but would be under the government which would control policy. In its report submitted to the government in 1966, the Committee on Broadcasting and Information Media headed by A.K. Chanda, a former Comptroller and Auditor General of India, had suggested the conversion of All India Radio and Doordarshan into two autonomous corporations. The Committee wanted the two media 'to be kept out of the pale of political influence'. Chanda spoke of the 'risk of administrative policy, newscasts and programmes being tuned to the philosophy of the political party in power' if All India Radio remained exclusively under government control.³ A working group, set up under the chairmanship of the well-known journalist B.G. Verghese to work out the details of autonomy in Doordarshan and All India Radio suggested in its report, submitted in 1978, the formation of an autonomous body, the Akash Bharati or the National Broadcasting Trust for both. A Bill for setting up an autonomous corporation, Prasar Bharati, for both AIR and Doordarshan, but enjoying a somewhat smaller measure of freedom than suggested by the Working Group, was presented in Parliament in May 1979. However, the Janata Party which was then in power, fell before the Bill could be passed.

After this, the only significant development on the autonomy front till the coming of the National Front government to power in 1989 with V.P. Singh as the prime minister, was a period of unprecedented openness and professionalism which began in Doordarshan in 1985 when Bhaskar Ghose, a highly sensitive member of the Indian Administrative Service, became the Director General; it ended with his summary removal in 1988. The National Front government passed a Prasar Bharati Act in August 1990, but fell before it was notified for implementation. Finally, autonomy became a reality in 1998 when Jaipal Reddy, Minister for Information and Broadcasting in the United Front government under the prime ministership of I.K. Gujral, took personal initiative to set up Prasar Bharati with a ten-member board headed by a chairman and an executive member in charge of running it. The Ordinance establishing it, however, lapsed on 6 May 1998. The new coalition in power at the Centre with Atal Behari Vajpayee as prime minister has enacted a new Ordinance. Unlike the one of its predecessor which made Prasar Bharati completely autonomous, the new Ordinance places it under the supervision of a parliamentary committee. While much will depend on how intrusive or otherwise the committee is, the question of the use to which that autonomy will be put, has been given a sharp edge by the functioning of Prasar Bharati. While there has been more openness in political discussions and coverage, complaints of bias have been frequently heard during the mid-term elections in February and March. Besides, the programmes continue to be entertainment and trivia oriented, dishing out violence and sex

in large helpings and the flow and character of advertisements remain unchanged. Nor has it in the least ceased to be the cutting edge of the consumer culture.

Autonomy, however genuine, will fail to make Doordarshan an effective medium of discourse unless the nature of its entertainment software and the advertisements it shows, changes. Those in charge of the set-up created last year can doubtless say with justification that they had not had the time to do that as it would require a root-and-branch cleansing and some deep thinking about Doordarshan's identity and purpose and the means of realizing the latter. It will be a very difficult task but at least people are talking about it. A problem of a far more fundamental nature — television's epistemic impact on discourse — has hardly been discussed.

Alvin Gouldner showed how the print media gave a new dimension to the written culture in the form of what he calls the 'elaborated discourse'. A mistake made in a face-to-face conversation can be corrected on the spot or forgotten later. Also, a speaker can answer on-the-spot questions arising in a listener's mind. He or she can convey a lot through — and a listener can interpret a lot from — facial expressions, gestures, tone of voice, dress and so on. A mistake in a printed book can neither be corrected nor forgotten easily. Besides, a writer has to anticipate the questions that his text may raise in the minds of distant readers and answer them in advance. And, since he cannot convey anything through his facial expressions, gestures and so on, and a far-away reader may not know anything about the local references, the author has to spell everything out in great detail. Also, while someone engaged in a conversation can break it off and resume at some other time, the writer has to systematically develop his argument from premise to conclusion in the book or article itself. On his part, the reader, undistracted by gestures and facial expressions, can concentrate better on the text in front. This knowledge, in turn, makes the author put in greater effort.

The elaborated discourse, arising from the above processes and factors, has enabled the building of the complex structures of thought and reasoning characterizing modern philosophical systems. Also, rational argumentation, which sustains it, makes possible the discourse which is central to the functioning of modern democracies. Television, whose distinguishing feature is its visual appeal, is now threatening the survival of the elaborated discourse. A picture is a visual image of an object; it is recognized. A word represents an object symbolically. It is interpreted. The mind, therefore, registers a picture and a word through two different processes. Interpreting and understanding a text invariably requires concentration and thinking, the rigour of the latter increasing with the complexity of the subject and its articulation. Watching a picture requires no such thing.

A photograph — that of Hiroshima devastated by the atom bomb, for example — can spur reflection. That, however, would require not only looking at it but also time to absorb its implications and reflecting on it.

Television, where the picture is always in motion, is so great that the eye cannot do so for any length of time, discarding all this. So long as the picture is in motion it is not an American network television, it is a *television*. In other words, the eye never rests, always has something new to see.¹⁷⁵

The main impact of moving images on television engages the eye but does not provide thought. Since television generally tends to entertain without taxing the mind, most people at the end of a hard day sit in front of their receiver sets and lose themselves in the stream of music and pleasing visuals. No longer do they relax in the evening with a magazine or novel. The reading habit, and hence the print culture which is critically dependent on it, also becomes a casualty of this undermining discourse, so does the fact that television once again takes one back close to direct face to face communication. Unlike the reader of a printed tract who locates errors quickly because he or she actively concentrates on what is in front of her, a person watching television often overlooks factual mistakes in narration or voice-overs because he or she is more hooked on to the music and the visual. Besides, the actions, gestures, facial expressions, mannerisms and inflections convey as much as what people on the screen say. They, therefore, do not have to spell out everything in great detail, as is necessary in a printed tract.

The question arises: Will the decline of elaborated discourse thanks to the impact of television, deprive society of the principal process of reflecting on itself and the world, rectifying itself and mapping out new paths to progress? If this happens the process of rational thinking which has to a great extent made possible the progress that humankind has made in all spheres since European Renaissance would be in jeopardy. The solution is not banishing television — which is neither possible nor desirable — but adopting a two-pronged approach to it. The first will be helping people to acquire the maturity to live with television without surrendering their autonomy to it. This will require a reorientation of the system of education, the cultural environment and the social and economic structures and relations which influence an individual's personality and evolution. It will be a monumental task which, given the complex character, massive size and the present state of India's society, will take decades to accomplish. Secondly, the attempt should be to redefine television's role as a medium to make it an ally and not an adversary of discourse. This will require serious and exhaustive deliberation. Meanwhile, some results may follow if it is made mandatory for television companies with a certain level of turnover to support a serious, discourse-oriented channel like BBC's Channel Four or Discovery channel or Doordarshan's defunct Channel Three.

Any argument that the print media can play an important role in shaping the character of television, making it an ally and not an adversary of discourse, would overlook the fact that nowhere has it been able to do so and for obvious reasons. Television is now almost the paramount medium. The growing

multitudes addicted to it will not pay much attention to warnings about its adverse effects on discourse. Nor are the captains of business and industry in a market economy likely to pay attention to criticism of a medium which has given advertising a reach and thrust it never had before. While print media continue to grow, the greater flow of advertisements into television prompts media entrepreneurs not only to establish television channels and companies but also expand their operations. Hence they are unlikely to encourage criticism of the television's role in the trivialization of discourse and the destruction of its epistemic foundation in the print culture. In fact, many print media companies have in effect accepted the hegemony of television. In addition to advertising television programmes, they bring out attractive colour supplements and pull-outs which write about the serials being shown and made, the timings, the private lives of the stars of the small screen and so on. In the process, the Press is losing its distinctive character and becoming an extension of television.

What is happening can only be described as the colonization of the print media by television. The latter is imposing its culture on the former in roughly the same way the colonial powers imposed theirs on the colonized. Newspapers and magazines, even when they do not have supplements and pull-outs on television programmes and stars, are acquiring television's orientation towards entertainment in a competitive market whose mood is set by television. The more serious segments of the print media, particularly the quality and better-known dailies and journals, still involve themselves in serious discourse. They too, however, are changing and in an environment in which people prefer to be permanently entertained and avoid thinking, their role as media of critical discourse is liable to be overshadowed by their role as media of entertainment. The minority of readers who generally pore over the more serious parts of a paper like the editorials, reflective editorial page articles, and book reviews and long essays in Sunday magazines is rapidly becoming smaller compared to the total readership; the majority of readers who read only sports, cinema and television news and give a cursory glance at the major news items, is increasing as fast. The trend is set to gather much greater momentum. As the market economy spreads its tentacles deeper and wider into the country, people, drained by the effort required to hold their own in an increasingly competitive society, are progressively inclined to seek nothing but relaxation and entertainment outside their hours of work.

Seeking to make television discourse-friendly will therefore be an uphill task and it will be unrealistic to expect owners of print media establishments to engage in it. Few of them are aware of the threat television poses to modern civilization. Besides, several of them are stout champions of market economy and steeped in the consumer- and entertainment-oriented culture television represents. Basically, media's ethos is shaped by their dialectic with the way of life — culture in the most comprehensive sense of the term — of the dominant and decisive elements of the society in which they function. In

India, as in the United States, advertising and related communications enterprises are increasingly shaping not only the consumption choices and personal life-styles and predilections of individuals, but politics as well. Witness the growing role of advertising agencies and public-relations consultants in elections during the last decade or so. Communication techniques increasingly associated with advertising, including the use of audio and video cassettes with songs and music, are used more and more in election campaigns which are conducted increasingly in a carnival atmosphere with violence lurking just below the surface. The ethos of the society influences that of the media which are a part of it and which must to a great extent reflect its interests to attract readers, viewers or listeners.

Modern media enable society to reflect on itself through discourse. While the media which are free but cannot adequately play this instrumental role are preferable to a shackled media, they fail to make the grade in terms of their most critical function. Their freedom goes unutilized or underutilized and is not of much benefit to their society. The latter, even when technically a democracy, may constitute of people who, lacking in the capacity for autonomous rational thinking, can be manipulated by forces external to them and reduced to automatons acting to their own detriment and to the detriment of their society and freedom. As we have seen, the danger of such a situation arising in India is not as remote as some may think. Unfortunately, there is in this country today, little discussion on the nature of the dialectic between media and society, the epistemic and cultural impact of television, and the latter's interface with the print media. A beginning should be made immediately, and institutions like the Parliament and the PCI should take the initiative if the media do not. So should organized groups of citizens. In the last analysis, like their government, a people deserve the media they get.

NOTES

1. Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium is the Message*, Digital Edition, Hardwired, San Francisco, 1996. The apology is for playing around with the title of the book.
2. S. Natarajan, *A History of the Press in India* (issued under the auspices of the Audit Bureau of Circulation Limited), Asia Publishing House, 1962, p. 296.
3. The Registrar of Newspapers in India (RNI), established following a recommendation by the first Press Commission, maintains records about all newspapers in India after verifying their availability and circulation. The title of a newspaper registered with the RNI cannot be used by another. Registration with the RNI entitles a newspaper to apply for postal concession. The RNI is also supposed to ensure that newspapers are published according to the provisions of the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1967.
4. Indian Newspaper Society (INS) was formed in 1939 as Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society (IENS). It changed over to its present name in 1988.

5. *Indian Newspaper Society Press Handbook '96*, Indian Newspaper Society, Delhi, p. cxii
6. *Ibid.*, p. 55.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 513.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 831.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 318
10. *Ibid.*, p. 327.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 299.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 725.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 396.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 661.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 649.
16. *Ibid.*, p. cvii.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 339.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 342.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 828
20. *Desh*, a highly respected literary fortnightly was earlier a weekly.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 209.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 801.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 828.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 865.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 792.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 237.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 267.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 130.
29. Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) figure for January–June 1996, conveyed to the author by a senior executive of *The Hindu* group.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 128.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 132
32. *Ibid.*, p. 134.
33. Subir Ghosh, *Mass Media Today: In the Indian Context*, Profile Publishers, Calcutta, 1991, p. 137.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 138. Also, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, *Annual Report 1996–7*, p. 23.
35. Sevanti Ninan, *Through the Magic Window: Television and Change in India*, Penguin Books India, 1995, p. 2.
36. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Annual Report 1996–7*, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, p. 22.
37. Subir Ghosh, *op cit.*, pp. 155–6.
38. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Annual Report 1996–7*, p. 26.
39. Sevanti Ninan, *op cit.*, pp. 156–7.

40. Ibid., p. 158.
41. Ibid., p. 159.
42. Ibid., p. 163.
43. It should really be 1.99 per cent (97.3 per cent minus 95.4 per cent).
44. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, op cit., p. 27.
45. Subir Ghosh, op cit., p. 109.
46. Ibid., p. 109.
47. Ibid., p. 109.
48. Chakravartty, Nikhil, 'The Press: Changing Face of the Watchdog', *The Hindu*, special supplement issued on the 50th anniversary of India's Independence, 15 August 1997.
49. Bishwanath Ghosh, 'Consumer Cult Cashes in on Credit Cards', *Indian Express*, Delhi, 3 January 1996.
50. From extracts from *The Economic Survey*, Ministry of Finance, Government of India, presented to Parliament on 25 February 1997, and carried in *The Hindu*, Delhi, on 26 February 1997.
51. T.N. Ninan and Chander Uday Singh, with bureau reports, 'The Consumer Boom', *India Today*, 15 February 1984.
52. This and other production figures mentioned in this and the following paragraph have been provided by the Confederation of Indian Industry.
53. INS Yearbook 1996, p. cxi
54. IENS Yearbook, 1981, p. cxvi.
55. It had not yet become INS.
56. T.N. Ninan and Chander Uday Singh, op cit.
57. Seema Bassi, *Advertising & Marketing: Ruling a Good Year*, *The Times of India*, Delhi, 28 January 1997.
58. A & M Agency report: Top 100: Rating by Gross Income, A & M, 16-31 December 1997, p. 48.
59. Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, Penguin Books, p. 37.
60. Erich Fromm, *To Have or To Be?*, Abacus Edition, London, 1980 reprint, p. 36.
61. Erich Fromm, *Fear of Freedom* (reissued as *Escape from Freedom*), Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1960.
62. Subir Ghosh, op cit., p. 137.
63. Quoted in Sevanti Ninan, op cit., p. 22.
64. Reproduced in G.S. Bhargava (ed.), *Government Media Autonomy and After*, Institute of Social Sciences and Concept Publishing Company, New Delhi, 1991, Annexure 1, pp. 96-8.
65. Subir Ghosh, op cit., pp. 142-3.
66. Sevanti Ninan, op cit., pp. 100-1.
67. Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, *Annual Report 1996-7*, pp. 30-1.
68. Sevanti Ninan, op cit., p. 61.

69. Ibid., p. 68.
70. A plan attributed to the Congress president K. Kamaraj under which important Congress ministers at the Centre and chief ministers of the states quit office to work for the party.
71. A Commission of Inquiry presided over by Justice M.P. Thakkar of the Supreme Court was appointed in November 1984 to inquire into the circumstances of Indira Gandhi's assassination on 31 October 1984. Apparently unnerved by its contents, the government had a law passed in May 1986, to enable the Commission's report to be kept secret on the ground that it concerned national security and security of the prime minister.
72. The present Press Council of India was created by the Press Council Act 1978. There was another Press Council earlier, established in 1966 following legislation in 1965. It was abolished during the Emergency in 1976 as it was being found to be unpliant.
73. *Radio and Television: Report of the Committee on Broadcasting and Information Media*, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, New Delhi, 1966, pp. 181-2.
74. Alvin W. Gouldner, *The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology: The Origins, Grammar and Future of Ideology*, Oxford University Press, paperback, New York, 1982.
75. Neil Postman, op cit., p. 86.



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